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Daily Report

DATE DUE
31 Dec. 95

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-95-235
Thursday
7 December 1995

Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

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Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 28 Nov

NC0612132395

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 28 November edition of the Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Rajab Refers to Foiled Downtown Cairo Bombing
2. Novelist Views Violence in Religion, Normalization With Israel
3. Al-Azhar Defended as Moderate Bulwark of Islam, Peres Rebuked
4. Al-Azhar University Rector Warns Against Demonstrations, Rioting
5. Director of Islamic Cultural Center in Russia Interviewed
6. Articles Fault Dayton Agreement on Bosnia-Herzegovina

RAJAB REFERS TO FOILED DOWNTOWN CAIRO BOMBING

A 400-word article by Samir Rajab, the newspaper's chairman of the board, in the "Truthfully I Say" column on page 1, refers to a foiled attempt to detonate a booby-trapped car in Cairo's Khan al-Khalili neighborhood "a few days ago."

Rajab declares that if the operation had been carried out, it would not have brought "them" closer to the seat of power but would have merely caused the death of innocent bystanders. He does not identify "them" or name any particular organization or group.

He urges new measures against "the advocates of extremism and misguidance" and says that the new People's Assembly—elections for which are under way—will have "a decisive and effective role in mobilizing the masses and rousing their anger against the terrorists."

Rajab calls for new laws to fight this phenomenon.

He urges "striking while the iron is hot" and calls on the Egyptian Foreign Ministry to make swift contacts to promote an international antiterrorism agreement.

NOVELIST VIEWS VIOLENCE IN RELIGION, NORMALIZATION WITH ISRAEL

On pages 10 and 11 there is an approximately 3,000-word interview with the Egyptian novelist Fathi Ghanim, an advocate of "enlightenment," which he terms the "only road that leads to God."

In the introduction to the interview, conducted by Tariq 'Abdallah, Ghanim is described as a writer "who, in his novels, has handled religion in a different way and tackled contemporary issues that have religion at their core, including terrorism and extremism in the name of religion, and also the current conflict among the various heavenly religions and the world's diverse cultures."

In this interview, Ghanim remarks that if schools provide a better opportunity for learning about and understanding Western and other cultures, there will be less confusion and conflict, especially in today's era of instant communication.

He says religion as such is not a source of violence, but that the causes of violence are attitudes of vanity by opinionated people who believe that they alone understand what religion means. He urges reason as a key to faith in God.

The following four points are noteworthy in his interview:

First, he warns that the most dangerous aspect of evil is that it can come out of places of worship, which offer a perfect camouflage for Satan to "infiltrate and incite people to evil and violence."

Second, he calls for dealing with religion-related violence by "dialogue and democratic methods," noting that most people will turn against religion-related violence once they are given a minimal dose of "enlightenment."

Third, he says Muslim nations are backward in comparison with Christian nations because their understanding and approach to Islam is "superficial and dependent on literal repetition." The Christian nations use reason and are advanced. But he deplores Western "arrogance and race-based attitudes of superiority" and says that if they had taken more heed of Christian teachings they would have protected themselves from "the moral dissolution that afflicts them today."

Asked about his attitude to normalization with Israel, he says it can only take place after full peace is achieved and when the public accepts it: "Normalization must follow a comprehensive and just peace in the Arab region. Only then can we speak of normalization. What we are seeing now are negotiations among leaders. At the grassroots level, I do not think you will see acceptance of normalization. Witness the scenes of rejoicing at Rabin's death."

AL-AZHAR DEFENDED AS MODERATE BULWARK OF ISLAM; PERES REBUKED

In the "In Total Frankness" column on page 6, Basyuni al-Halawani discusses two issues in two 150-word articles.

In the first article, "Al-Azhar's Role and the Climate of Freedom," al-Halawani hints that some people are trying to drive a wedge between the al-Azhar institution and the Egyptian State. He defends al-Azhar as "moderate, middle-of-the-road, and opposed to all forms of extremism and terrorism."

He notes that al-Azhar will "stand firm against those who try to offend God's religion" but will do so "in a climate of freedom of opinion and democracy."

In the second article, "Jerusalem and Jewish Extremism," al-Halawani takes issue with remarks by Shim'on Peres' after being named new Israeli prime minister that the Muslims have no right to Jerusalem and that Israel will not negotiate the city's future.

Al-Halawani says: "These remarks need no interpretation or comment. It is clear that the voice of Israeli extremism will grow louder in the next few years. It is not true that Rabin's assassination by a Jewish extremist will make the Israeli Government pursue extremists and uproot Jewish extremism, unless Israel executes 80 percent of its citizens and replaces them with other inhabitants who have no links with the Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

AL-AZHAR UNIVERSITY RECTOR WARNS AGAINST DEMONSTRATIONS, RIOTING

A 300-word report on page 2 says that the al-Azhar University rector, Dr. Ahmad 'Umar Hashim, has distributed a memorandum to all the university's colleges warning students "not to join tendentious streams that have suspect objectives and seek to cause riots and confuse the educational process by way of demonstrations, the distribution of leaflets, and posters that offend the venerable university."

The rector's memorandum notes that "some individuals among the students and also from outside the university are constantly trying to lure students out of their lecture halls to join assemblies where they are asked to repeat deceptive slogans and chants, cause riots, and obstruct the university's educational vocation."

DIRECTOR OF ISLAMIC CULTURAL CENTER IN RUSSIA INTERVIEWED

Among the items in the "Muslims Worldwide" section on pages 20 and 21, there is an interview on page 20 with Dr. Sa'id al-Rushd, director of the Islamic Cultural Center in Russia. In the 1,500-word interview, conducted by Jamal Salim, al-Rushd, a Russian of Syrian origin, says the center was founded in 1990 to serve Russia's 20 million Muslims, propagate the Muslim call in some 12 autonomous republics in the Russian Federation with large Muslim minorities, and maintain ongoing ties with the Muslims in the Central Asian republics. He says the center has 60 branches in Russia. Al-Rushd, who prepared a Russian translation of the Koran with the help of his Russian-born wife, says his center does not interfere in politics, but focuses on distributing Russian translations of the Koran, organizing conferences to defend the good image of Islam against its detractors, and confronting Christian proselytizing in the former communist world.

On the Chechen issue, he says that although the Islamic Cultural Center is nonpolitical, Russia's Muslims were affected by the human losses suffered by the Chechen Muslims in the conflict with Russia, particularly as they are the weaker party. He calls for a peaceful resolution of the dispute.

ARTICLES FAULT DAYTON AGREEMENT ON BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

In the same section a 700-word article by Ashraf Abu-al-Hawl on page 21 says the U.S.-sponsored Dayton agreement on Bosnia-Herzegovina is tottering and will not last and that it was inspired by the hope of making electoral gains.

The writer says: "Put simply, the agreement was dictated to Bosnia. The Americans abandoned Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic during the negotiations after he believed they were really backing him."

The writer deplores that the "Serbian separatist murderers were awarded 50 percent of Bosnia" and fears that the Bosnian Serbs will unite with Serbia proper in two or three years. He says he believes Izetbegovic signed the Dayton agreement in the knowledge that it will collapse and because he expects the Serbs and Croats to reject it eventually.

In a related 600-word article on page 10, Majdi Salim blames what he sees as the initial U.S. silence over events in the former Yugoslavia and says the United States finally supported the Bosnian demand for an independent state on condition "that it should not be an Islamic state but a semi-European state." He says the United States sponsored the Dayton agreement to prove to the Europeans that it is "the strongest power and the decisionmaker" everywhere, even in Europe.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 28 Nov

NC0512133795

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 28 November edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Verdicts Against Muslim Brothers Protested
2. Ruling Party's Anti-Brotherhood Slogans Reported
3. Chief Editor Notes Islam's Role in Politics
4. Labor Party Official Urges Voting for Islamic Candidates
5. Labor Party, Islamic Alliance Candidates, Supporters Arrested
6. Comment on Verdicts Against Muslim Brothers
7. Muslim Brotherhood Defendants Issue Statement After Verdict
8. Human Rights Body Denounces Brothers' Military Trial
9. Mustafa Mashhur Denounces Trials, Defends Brothers
10. Students Protest Verdicts Against Muslim Brothers
11. Report on Islamic Conference in Northern Cyprus
12. Writer Cited on Terrorism Charges, Religion's Role

VERDICTS AGAINST MUSLIM BROTHERS PROTESTED

An approximately 800-word report on pages 1 and 8, filed by Dawud Hasan, cites various reactions to verdicts passed by a military court against 81 Muslim Brotherhood leaders.

The report says that People's Assembly election campaigns in the provinces turned to marches denouncing the trials in al-Jizah and Western Cairo. It adds that universities saw "similar" marches and that Human Rights and trade union organizations issued statements and reports "demanding" the Brothers' release.

The report says that during his election campaign, Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, a Muslim Brotherhood candidate, announced that the Brothers denounce and refuse to use violence against their oppression and the prison sentences passed on their leaders. He also denounced the blowing up of the Egyptian Embassy in Pakistan. The report adds that various universities staged demonstrations to protest the verdicts. The Trade Unions' Coordination Committee "asked" President Mubarak not to endorse the sentences and "immediately" release the trade union leaders.

The Egyptian Human Rights Organization issued a "detailed report" on the military trials, "asserting that they lacked all constitutional and international guarantees, obligations, and documents that secure for the defendants the right to a fair trial."

The report says that the U.S. Middle East Watch issued a report denouncing the trials. The organization, the report adds, asked Mubarak to halt the trial of civilians at military courts and not to endorse the military verdicts. The Middle East Watch deputy director, who attended the trial, denounced the verdicts and "told" AL-SHA'B that they were unfair because the Brothers were not allowed to appear before a civilian judge.

The report says that the Muslim Brothers in Jordan issued a statement denouncing the verdicts and saying that they reflected "the crisis which the Egyptian Regime is experiencing with its people and itself."

RULING PARTY'S ANTI-BROTHERHOOD SLOGANS REPORTED

An unattributed, 100-word front page report says the ruling party "glutted" Cairo's maim streets and squares and the provinces with signs carrying writings against Muslim Brothers. They included writings such as "Yes to Islam, no to the Brothers," "No to the illegal Brothers group, the Brothers and terrorism are two sides of the same coin," and "No to the murderers of our sons in Pakistan."

CHIEF EDITOR NOTES ISLAM'S ROLE IN POLITICS

AL-SHA'B's Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn writes an approximately 1,400-word article on page 2 urging people to exercise their right and cast their votes in the People's Assembly elections, noting Islam's role in politics.

He begins by saying: "Let us make tomorrow, Wednesday, a day for the cause of God and let us raise a permanent slogan—everything is for God and in the cause of God. Citing Koranic verses about the believer's need to do what is right, he says the state-run religious media overlook these verses. But, he adds, the Koran in every home is a proof for the believers that they should not be selective in implementing the book's injunctions.

He says improving "our" situation is contingent upon "our serious dealing with God's Book" and implementing all its verses and rulings without discrimination, "otherwise we will have turned Islam into another religion calling for poverty, submission, and humiliation."

He says that Islam has laid down "general rules" on politics and "comprehensive reform of society." He adds that Islam established a "fine balance between reforming the individual as a primary building block to reform society and reforming society as a general framework to reform all individuals." He goes on to say that the Prophet "urges us explicitly to rebel against the ruler if he errs or disobeys" and notes that elections are a "magnificent way to rebel against a ruler peacefully and bloodlessly."

He notes a "semi popular consensus" on rejecting the ruling party during the election campaign and criticizes the current state of affairs. He says: "Champions of the slogan Islam is the solution have become the rulers' arch enemy instead of Israel and world Zionism which are holding al-Aqsa Mosque captive and whose forces and warplanes carry out daily joy rides, killing the Lebanese and Palestinians in south Lebanon."

Referring to election day, he says "tomorrow" is a natural day for change and that Islam is the one that "invented democracy and election" and "legalized" replacing the ruler. He adds: "Our call is addressed to all Egyptians, Muslims and Copts. What the Muslims are suffering is shared by the Copts."

LABOR PARTY OFFICIAL URGES VOTING FOR ISLAMIC CANDIDATES

Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn writes a 420-word article on page 3 on the People's Assembly elections, asserting that the ruling party's aim is to "rig" the elections.

He says: "Voters, the National Democratic Party has humiliated Egypt and the Arabs and Muslims before the Zionists. This party sought to waste our religion and life and it wrecked the economy with its agricultural and industrial policies." Urging the electorate to cast their votes correctly, he tells them to "support the candidates of the Islamic trend and the clean nationalist forces."

LABOR PARTY, ISLAMIC ALLIANCE CANDIDATES, SUPPORTERS ARRESTED

An unattributed, 600-word report on the same page says Labor Party and Islamic alliance candidate delegates and supporters have been arrested. The report says: "In a hysterical drive reflecting the fear of the National Democratic Party government, the State Security detective forces have arrested hundreds of supporters and delegates of the Labor Party and Islamic alliance candidates in the provinces. The campaign began at dawn last week and was in progress when the newspaper was being printed."

In al-Jizah, the report says, security forces arrested Counselor Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, the Islamic alliance candidate in al-Duqqi, and another candidate as they staged their election campaign.

COMMENT ON VERDICTS AGAINST MUSLIM BROTHERS

In a 650-word report on page 4, the author, Qutb al-'Arabi, criticizes the government's campaign against the Muslim Brothers and reports their trial "last Thursday." The report says Counselor Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, the Muslim Brothers' deputy general guide and official spokesman, commented on the trial. Al-Hudaybi is cited saying that the "issue has been political from the start" and that "the party that passed the verdict was not a court, even though the law says so."

The report says the aim of the political verdicts was to "liquidate the Islamic trend and Islamic activists in the circles of university professors and trade unions." The verdicts also aimed to "terrify the Brothers' supporters and the general public so that they would not support the Islamic trend candidates," the report adds.

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD DEFENDANTS ISSUE STATEMENT AFTER VERDICT

An approximately 800-word, unattributed report on page 4 carries "the final statement" of the Muslim Brotherhood defendants after a court session in which verdicts were issued against them.

In their statement, the defendants say: "In these tragic circumstances in which Islam is experiencing ferocious attacks and attempts to distort its principles and dismantle its teachings and values," we want to assert several things before "our" people. They say they are advocates of right, justice, and freedom and that they are working so that "all humanity" will enjoy welfare and peace. They add that their reform policy depends on good advice and legal and constitutional means, that they reject all forms of violence, and that they denounce the Egyptian Embassy blast in Pakistan. They also say that the military tribunal was illegal because it "violated the Constitution and law."

HUMAN RIGHTS BODY DENOUNCES BROTHERS' MILITARY TRIAL

An approximately 900-word, unattributed article on the same page carries a "report" issued by the Egyptian Human Rights Organization criticizing the Muslim Brothers' military trials and verdicts against them. In the report, the organization says the trial "constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles of the Constitution and law and a grave breach of internationally observed standards of justice."

MUSTAFA MASHHUR DENOUNCES TRIALS, DEFENDS BROTHERS

AL-SHA'B's page 5 carries an approximately 1,000-word article by the renowned writer Mustafa Mashhur, who denounces the military trial of Muslim Brotherhood members, criticizes the laws of "harassment," and defends the Brothers' policy.

He says the Brothers' arrest was an "uncalled-for injustice." He adds that the government's various laws, such as the emergency, press, trade unions, terrorism, and mayors laws, aim to "gag mouths" so that opposition elements who might object to such laws will not enter the People's Assembly.

He asks: "Why is this surprise method being used to deal with the Brothers?" He also asks: Why is it said that they are members of "an illegal, dissolved, or secret group seeking to undermine the Constitution." He says that in their activities the Brothers stick to a moderate, violence-free method and that they have denounced numerous acts of violence. He adds: "These verdicts will not affect any Muslim who performs the duties of this just religion. We will continue to call for implementing its teachings in a peaceful and moderate way. There will be no provocation, rashness, or conflict, but we will pursue the propagation. This is a faith that no injustice or oppression will force us to give up."

He says the Constitution is supposed to be respected and that it is the constitutional court that preserves the people's rights. Therefore, he adds, "we expect" this court to say that military courts have no authority to try civilians.

He adds: "The Zionists seem to have a role in creating this atmosphere of hostility toward the Brothers, because the Zionists are the fiercest enemies of the believers. Martyred Imam Hasan al-Banna adopted the Palestinian cause in the thirties and tried to resist the Zionist gangs. But an international Arab and Western conspiracy thwarted this jihad, established a truce, declared partition, saw the imam martyred, and saw the Zionist entity, which is based on terrorism, killing, displacement of people, and destruction, emerge. This entity received support from Western countries, such as Britain, the United States, and others. When the intifadah was staged, they regarded it as terrorism." He then adds: "We" greatly regret that the United States and some Western countries support the "Zionist enemy" financially and through the media.

STUDENTS PROTEST VERDICTS AGAINST MUSLIM BROTHERS

A 150-word report on page 8, filed by Tariq 'Abd-al-Hamid, says that for the second consecutive month "the volcano of anger" is erupting in al-Mansurah University. The report adds that massive demonstrations were held at the university protesting the recent military verdicts against Muslim Brotherhood leaders and the arrest of numerous students.

REPORT ON ISLAMIC CONFERENCE IN NORTHERN CYPRUS

Page 9 features an unattributed, 400-word report on "the second congress of the international Islamic popular leadership" held in northern Cyprus. The report says that the conference called for holding an Islamic-Christian conference on Jerusalem to "expose the U.S.-Zionist plot against the city." The conference also urged the Islamic countries to support the Libyan people over the "unjust blockade" and to support the mujahidin in Bosnia and Chechnya "materially and morally."

WRITER CITED ON TERRORISM CHARGES, RELIGION'S ROLE

In his "This is Our Religion" column on page 12, Islamic writer Muhammad al-Ghazali discusses terrorism and religion.

In the 250-word comment, he says he does not oppose punishing anyone who enforces his views with terrorism and forces people into his own faith, because "the Koran does not allow this." But, he adds, there is no reason why people who use leniency and argument should be treated with severity and violence.

After claiming that Israel has "intentions to expand" and that al-Aqsa Mosque is being threatened with destruction, to be replaced by the "temple of Solomon," he says: "We should protect our religion" against aggression.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 1 Dec

NC0612124395

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 1 December edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Angry Reaction to People's Assembly Vote, Results
2. Muslim Brotherhood's Legitimacy Stressed
3. Arab Reaction to Rabin, al-Shaqaqi Killings Lamented
4. Barcelona Conference on Mediterranean Cooperation Viewed
5. Islamic Leader Discusses Algeria's Presidential Elections

ANGRY REACTION TO PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY VOTE, RESULTS

This issue of AL-SHA'B features in its front and inside pages many reports and comments on the "rigged" 29 November People's Assembly elections and their partial results, which gave the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) a landslide victory. The newspaper carries its 1,300-word lead story about the elections under the banner headlines: "Government Loses Its Legitimacy," "Shukri Won in the Days of the Corrupt King and They Made Him Lose in Mubarak's Era," "Ugly Rigging Targeted All Islamic Alliance Candidates."

The report begins: "The government of despotism and corruption has set a new record in election rigging. It used all illegal, illegitimate, unethical, and unscrupulous weapons to achieve the normal false majority. The rigging weapon primarily targeted the Labor Party and the Islamic trend, but it also harmed most opposition candidates and liberal independents.' The report adds: "Police and NDP gangsters cooperated and distributed roles to achieve the ugly task. This means the fall of the ruling party's legitimacy, which is a necessary introduction for the party's fall through means other than the election." The report then goes on citing results as announced by the interior minister, noting that "no single candidate from the Labor Party or the Islamic trend" won the elections, and that six of these candidates will contest the run-offs on 6 December. The report notes that the other opposition parties achieved no better results. The report mentions some incidents in various constituencies to show "the government's insistence on rigging" the vote. A picture beside the report shows two employees behind a ballot box, their eyes blacked out by the newspaper, speaking to a woman voter. The caption reads: "The acme of rigging: The head of the election committee is publicly forcing this lady to vote for the NDP."

—The newspaper publishes in its inside pages, mainly pages 2, 3, and 8, extensive reportage on the proceedings of the vote in various constituencies, claiming rigging, bullying of voters, security excesses, beatings of candidate representatives, and arrest of supporters. The reports say all these practices were meant to allow NDP candidates to win and opposition candidates to lose.

The newspaper gives the following introduction to these several reports: "The election farce has exposed the ugly face of the NDP government. The government and its executioners treaded on the law. This time, everyone saw the scandal. The state crushed the will of the Egyptians and used gangsters and knife and axe wielders to rig the elections in favor of the NDP candidates. The efforts of thousands of candidates over many months were lost in the face of the crimes of the corruption gangs, which grew addicted to practicing unlawful acts and sucking the people's blood. We can only say: For us God suffices; He is the best disposer of affairs." [Koranic verse]

—A 1000-word report by Subhi Buhayri on page 1 discusses the violence that accompanied voting in some constituencies. Buhayri says 13 people were killed and 111 others were injured, at least 10 seriously, in "the black Wednesday farce." He says that more than 600 supporters of the Islamic Alliance [between the Labor Party and the Muslim Brotherhood] were arrested on Wednesday (29 November) alone, bringing the total number to 1,100. He says the violence was directed against those who rejected rigging and were trying to attenuate it. The reporter claims that "the police were the real perpetrator of the killings, whether by protecting the gangsters of some candidates or by interfering directly if necessary."

—An 800-word report by Mujahid al-'Arusi on page 1 says that all opposition and independent candidates in a named constituency, including Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn, practically withdrew from the election before the vote count. In a news conference, these candidates read out a joint statement explaining their position. The statement claims that in the absence of the candidates' representatives, the ballot boxes were stuffed with false cards in favor of the two NDP candidates. "The elections procedures and results were fully rigged," the statement is cited as saying.

—A brief comment signed "AL-SHA'B" appears above the front-page article of Labor Party leader Ibrahim Shukri. It reads: "Debauchery has been stretched to the limit. The ghoul of forgery was unreservedly released to prevent mujahid Ibrahim Shukri from making it to the parliament, of which he has almost continuously been a member since 1949, representing Shirbin, the constituency that he loved and he was loved by.

"If you do not feel ashamed, do whatever you like. These criminals have no shame. They are committing a heinous act that in itself provides the best proof that what happened Wednesday was not an election, but a slaughter of the voters' will. That debauchery has reached its limit is perhaps an indication that the tyrants will soon depart."

—In his 1,000-word column on pages 1 and 8, Labor Party leader Ibrahim Shukri reacts angrily to the voting procedure and results, dubbing the exercise "a flagrant forgery of the nation's will," and saying that 29 November 1995 will go down in history as the day when freedom was slaughtered and thuggery triumphed. He says that candidate representatives were not allowed into polling stations. He claims the government used gangsters, armed with clubs, knives, axes, and, in some cases, guns, to terrorize voters and representatives and to create confusion and panic to allow rigging. He claims that government employees were sent to vote for NDP candidates several times. Shukri concludes: "The government has proved by all means that it is forging the nation's will and that its existence is based on usurping the people's representation." It is clear, he says, that the ruling party is determined "to remain in power through terrorism, thuggery, forgery, and without any legitimacy at all."

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S LEGITIMACY STRESSED

In a 1,800-word article on page 5, Dr. Rafiq Habib discusses the Muslim Brotherhood and government campaign against the Islamic trend. The writer begins by citing recent government measures against the Islamic trend supporters, such as arresting Islamists and imposing laws restricting the freedom of professional associations and the press. For the government to enjoy autocratic, undisputed power, the writer says, "it was necessary to get rid of one of the most effective forces in the Egyptian, Arab, and Islamic street; namely, the Muslim Brotherhood group." He notes that the government "suddenly" considered the group illegal although it previously allowed all its activity.

This has been the case with the Muslim Brotherhood since the 1952 revolution, he says. Rulers began their terms with support for the group and ended them with a fight against it, he explains. "There is nothing vague here. Every regime begins with support for the Brothers so as to enjoy legitimacy. But then the regime obtains its legitimacy from its power, authority, and the support of the Army and police. When it has made sure that it is powerful enough to rule unilaterally, it moves the Brothers out of the way because it does not want partners, and, more importantly, because it does not want rivals on the issue of legitimacy." Through this long history, the writer says, "the Muslim Brotherhood has proved that it genuinely expresses the will of deep-rooted social and political forces. Thus, it represents a real elite force stemming from the nation, not one imposed on the nation by coercion, force, and violence."

Hinting that the government practices may push the group towards violence, the writer says: "Instead of proving that it believes in pluralism, the government proved true a serious argument the Brothers have tried to resist by all means over the past quarter of a century. It is the argument offered by the Islamic groups that use violence as a means for introducing change. These groups stressed that it is not possible to play a political role and that theories on gradual change, reform, and education have proved a failure."

The writer goes on to say that those Islamic groups "also stressed an important implicit idea; namely, that the presence of the Brothers and other Islamic figures and movements within the framework of government legitimacy, and their practicing of their roles from within the regime, gives the regime a power it will ultimately use to attack the Islamic movement." Seeing that the regime is attacking the moderate Islamic forces, the writer says: "It is as if the regime is giving legitimacy to violence, once when it uses violence excessively and again when it makes violence the only alternative to the angry youths." The writer calls for allowing the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic forces to freely practice political activity and warns that "what the regime and its supporters are now doing will close all legitimate windows to these forces, which pushes the country toward a real or symbolic civil war and reasserts the logic of violence as the only effective means for change by the society's forces."

—In an 800-word article on page 5, Midhat Abu-al-Fadl offers legal discussion to prove that the texts that allow the president of the Republic to refer civilians to military courts or to ratify or cancel sentences passed by the state security courts are unconstitutional.

ARAB REACTION TO RABIN, AL-SHAQAQI KILLINGS LAMENTED

In a 600-word article on page 5, Dr. Sa'id Salamah Ibrahim laments the fact that Arabs and Muslims "shed no single tear" for the murder of Islamic Jihad Leader Fathi al-Shaqaqi, allegedly by Mosad agents in Malta, while they expressed great pain and sadness for the death of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's. The writer notes Rabin's policy of killing Palestinians and Muslims and building settlements. He says Fathi al-Shaqaqi was an advocate of a just cause who raised the banner of jihad as a legitimate defense against those who usurped his homeland.

BARCELONA CONFERENCE ON MEDITERRANEAN COOPERATION VIEWED

A 2,500-word report by Hasan al-Qamhawi on page 6 analyzes the Barcelona conference for regional cooperation among the Mediterranean countries. It contends that one of the conference objectives is to integrate Israel in the region through economic cooperation. Referring to the conference statement on the need for cooperation to fight terrorism, the write says that "if we apply the Western concept, and also the prevailing Arab concept [concerning terrorism], we will conclude that the agreement seeks to fight the Islamic phenomenon and the Islamic trend."

—A related 1,800-word report by Muna Yasin on page 9 says the Barcelona Conference seeks to close the door of Europe to Muslim immigrants and to open the doors of the south to the influence of Europe's economy and culture.

ISLAMIC LEADER DISCUSSES ALGERIA's PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

In a 2,500-word article on page 12, Tunisian Islamic leader Shaykh Rachid Ghannouchi discusses the recent presidential elections in Algeria and asks what President Zeroual will do now. He says Zeroual now has a rare historic chance to lead Algeria safely to the shore of peace, security, stability, and national unity. He hopes Zeroual, who now derives his legitimacy from the people, will revolt against the military establishment, which, he says, antagonizes Algeria's Arab and Muslim identity. He urges dialogue with the opposition and the holding of fair parliamentary elections. But Ghannouchi, who does not doubt Zeroual's patriotism and clean conduct, doubts whether Zeroual can do that. We will continue to have doubts until the opposite is proved, he says, and "we will hold fast to the solid principle: The continuation of the struggle to change the balances of power, patience, steadfastness, and solidarity until God's promise is fulfilled."

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Receives UNFPA Director, Juppe's Message

JN0612172995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received Dr. Nafisah Sadiq, executive director of the United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], at the Presidency headquarters in Gaza this afternoon.

The meeting was attended by Terje Larsen, Coordinator of UN activities. Talks dealt with the UNFPA contribution to setting up projects related to population in the National Authority areas. The UNFPA will participate in a $2 million project that is related to the Palestinian population.

Dr. Sadiq expressed pleasure to visit Gaza and meet with President 'Arafat. She said that she and her delegation will visit Jerusalem on Thursday.

Meanwhile, President 'Arafat received a message from French Prime Minister Alain Juppe in which he expressed his government's support for the peace process. Juppe's message, which 'Arafat received at a meeting with a delegation of the French Ministry of Finance and Economy and the French consul-general at the Presidency headquarters in Gaza this afternoon, dealt with the French Government's support for the National Authority, whether directly or within the European Union. Juppe hailed the Palestinian-French relations. 'Arafat and the French delegation discussed the possibility of a French contribution to setting up a number of infrastructure projects in the National Authority areas, especially the Gaza port project.

Israel Approves Return of Some 1,400 PLO Cadres

TA0612152995 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 6 Dec 95 pp 1, 23

[Report by special correspondent Jawad Sa'id]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — The military attache in the Palestinian Embassy in Amman announced that the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] has obtained the Israeli side's approval for the return of about 1,400 PLO members and cadres.

Colonel 'Ali Badiwi said that the repatriation of the Palestinian cadres will begin next week as soon as the measures relating to their return are finalized. He pointed out that the Palestinian Embassy will begin to fill in the personal forms for the returnees as of Wednesday [6 December].

According to the list of names, the returnees are from various PLO factions in Jordan, Iraq, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen.

Col. Badiwi said that these cadres will be distributed in various areas that are subject to the PNA and also in those areas that will subsequently be taken over from the Israeli army in accordance with the timetable stipulated in the Palestinian-Israeli agreement.

The Palestinian military official affirmed that the PNA is expected to receive other lists [military and civilian] which will include the rest of the PLO members and cadres in Arab countries.

Al-Husayni: 70,000 Registered for Elections

JN0612180695 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem file in the National Authority, said that so far 70,000 voters have registered for the elections in the Jerusalem area.

In a news conference on the legislative elections held at the Information Ministry in al-Birah today, al-Husayni said the legislative elections in Jerusalem do not influence the rights of the Palestinians in the holy city.

Islamic Jihad in Gaza, West Bank Reject Shalah as Head

TA0612191595 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Video report by 'Imanu'el Rosen]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Jihad is finding it hard to recover from the killing of Fathi al-Shaqaqi. According to reports arriving in Jerusalem, two men slated to replace him refused to lead the organization fearing Israel. Ramadan Shalah, the man finally elected leader, cannot enforce his reign over Gaza. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports:

[Rosen] On 26 October, in Malta, unidentified assailants, who everyone believe were Mosad agents, assassinated Islamic Jihad leader Fathi al-Shaqaqi. Several days later, al-Shaqaqi was buried in Damascus and Dr. Ramadan Shalah was appointed as his replacement. This was a hasty appointment. Shalah seemed like he was quickly assuming his role, but behind the scenes a drama took place.

Reports arriving in Jerusalem indicate that Shalah was not the natural candidate for the post. Two other Islamic Jihad leaders who were offered the job declined, probably for fear of Israel's long arm and perhaps due to pressure from Syria, which would not have them.

Shalah, a moderate by Islamic Jihad standards, was the third option, not a good one, and was appointed almost for lack of a better choice. And indeed, Voice of Palestine from Gaza reported yesterday that Islamic Jihad members in the West Bank and Gaza refuse to approve Shalah's appointment as movement secretary general.

Meanwhile, it is believed in Israel that Islamic Jihad will continue carrying out terror attacks and trying to avenge al-Shaqaqi's murder.

'Arafat Receives Hamas Delegation; Meeting 'Cordial'

JN0712073195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat received a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] delegation at the Presidency in Gaza last night. The meeting was cordial and positive. At the meeting, President 'Arafat urged all to take part in the upcoming legislative elections to promote democracy and national unity.

Hamas Makes 'Irrevocable' Decision To Boycott Election

LD0612134195 Tehran IRNA in English 1316 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Athens, Dec. 6, IRNA — The Islamic Resistance Movement in occupied Palestine, Hamas, has made a formal and final decision to boycott the election called by 'Arafat's Palestine National Authority for 22 January. According to a dispatch from Quds [Jerusalem] Wednesday, the decision has been circulated to mosques all over the territories occupied after 1967.

Shaykh Bassam Jarrar, an Islamist leader from the Ramallah area, said Tuesday night that Hamas' rejection is "final, formal and irrevocable." He explained that the Islamic movement regarded the upcoming election a "farce" aimed at legitimizing the Oslo accords and seeking to perpetuate Zionist rule on Palestinian soil.

"We are not going to be part to this absurd travesty, let 'Arafat complete what he started," said Jarrar before two hundred political activists from the al-Khalil [Hebron] area.

Jarrar went on to explain the flaws and dangers inherent in the Oslo agreement, saying that the proposed election was but symptomatic of the "scandalous accords." He pointed out that the election law was yet to be formally promulgated and that the would-be-council will have only administrative authority.

Islamic groups in Palestine hope that if a considerable segment of the population decided to boycott the election, the flaws of the election and of the whole peace process would be exposed to the world.

In Gaza, the formal declaration of the Khalas Salvation Party on participation in the poll seems to have been suspended indefinetly amidst stiff opposition from Hamas' rank and file.

Earlier, there were suggestions that Hamas might decide to participate in the election through a back door (through the Khalas party). However, it seems now that this is not the case, and that Hamas has made a final decision to boycott election.

Ghawshah: No Hamas Retreat From Jihad

96AA0047A Kuwait AL-MUJTAMA' in Arabic 31 Oct 95 pp 32-33

["Text" of interview with Hamas official spokesman Ibrahim Ghawshah by 'Atif al-Jawlani in Amman; date not given — first two paragraphs are AL—MUJTAMA' introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] The issue of the relations between the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and the Palestinian Authority [PA] has dominated the Palestinian political scene in the past few weeks and attracted the attention of the media and various political circles. The PA's media machine has been actively spreading rumors about the existence of an agreement between the PA and the Hamas leadership in Gaza and saying that the agreement would be signed when Hamas' leadership outside the occupied territories approves it. Head of the PA Yasir 'Arafat has announced that Hamas will participate in the elections for the autonomy council. PA key figures have said that the movement has agreed to suspend its military operations against the Israeli occupation to facilitate the achievement of an agreement with the PA. They also said that Hamas will be transformed into a political party in the near future.

To learn the truth and confirm these media reports, which have raised doubts and fears among some Islamic circles that support Hamas, AL—MUJTAMA' has interviewed Ibrahim Ghawshah, official spokesman of Hamas, on the latest developments in the relations between Hamas and the PA. The text of the interview follows:

[Al-Jawlani] Conflicting reports have been circulating about the delegation that left Gaza for Khartoum to meet with the Hamas leadership there. The PA is saying that this delegation represented Hamas at home, while the movement denies that. Can you clarify the matter to us?

[Ghawshah] We have explained from the beginning that the delegation, which was composed of Khalid al-Hindi, Isma'il Haniyah, 'Abdallah Muhanna, and Sa'id al-Namruti, did not represent Hamas nor the PA. It was a mediation delegation. This is what the delegation called itself. However, this does not contradict the fact that these brothers were members of Hamas in the past. Therefore, when they suggested that they go to hold talks with Hamas abroad, the PA agreed and so did Hamas in the Gaza Strip and abroad. The delegation's mission was to try to open a dialogue between the PA and Hamas to safeguard national unity and prevent any friction between the Palestinians.

[Al-Jawlani] The PA has been spreading rumors about disagreement and division in Hamas, between the leadership at home and abroad and between hardliners and moderates. What is your response to this?

[Ghawshah] The PA raises the issue of the internal and external leadership to drive a wedge and create a split in the movement. The PA knows that the internal and external leadership is the same — the same fiber and the same body. Hamas is characterized by the unity of its ideological and political structure, which guards against division as that faced by other Palestinian groups. All the Hamas members are completely free to express their opinion within the movement's frameworks. Decisions are made according to the consultative formula. They are binding on all Hamas members, even if they contradict the views of some. This happened in the darkest circumstances and most difficult junctures in the past.

Therefore, we say that the PA's claim is far from the truth. We confirm that all the Hamas leaders and members are hawks and hardliners against the Zionist occupation, but they are also moderate and rational when it comes to dangers jeopardizing the Palestinian people's unity or threatening to cause conflict among the Palestinians.

[Al-Jawlani] The PA is talking about the existence of a draft agreement with Hamas that will be signed soon. Is this correct?

[Ghawshah] If a dialogue takes place between Hamas and the PA, it will be a comprehensive political dialogue, covering all the issues of interest to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause. Each side should be free to put any issue on the agenda of such a dialogue.

As we know, Hamas has a specific agenda, whose backbone is the resistance of the Zionist occupation. The PA also has its own specific agenda, whose backbone is the peaceful settlement under the Oslo agreement. The two agendas will be put on the table for discussion. Hamas will try to reach common denominators with the PA to safeguard national unity and prevent internal conflict. This desire cannot succeed unless it is met by a similar PA desire.

As for the existence of agreements, we confirm that Hamas has approved no agreement or draft agreement. It is true that the PA has proposed some drafts, but the movement has rejected them. The PA is trying to create confusion by claiming that Hamas has approved a draft agreement, which they are waiting to sign. This is not true.

[Al-Jawlani] The PA claims that the draft agreement has been submitted to Shaykh Ahmad Yasin and he has approved it?

[Ghawshah] Shaykh Ahmad Yasin's firm and strong position is known. He has refused to be released from prison on certain conditions. How can those who visit him, with the approval of the Israeli occupation authorities, say that he agreed that resistance activity against the occupation should stop? Those who visited him were Knesset members or Fatah members, implementing what 'Arafat's PA wants. We have not heard any direct statement by Shaykh Yasin to judge whether what is being said is true or not.

[Al-Jawlani] There are signs that Hamas might abandon the jihad option to reach an agreement with the PA. However, PA officials are saying that no agreement can be reached with Hamas before it pledges to suspend military activity. Are you ready to make such a pledge?

[Ghawshah] This is one of the most sensitive issues that the PA has raised and exaggerated. Palestinian Official 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya conveyed such a proposal to Hamas abroad last April. The movement's response was clear and unequivocal: the resistance of the Zionist occupation is a strategic objective from which the movement cannot retreat. Hamas still holds the same position, for which thousands of its members, led by Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, have been jailed.

Has the occupation of Palestinian territory ended so that 'Arafat can say that we are moving from the minor jihad to the major jihad? Is not the occupation expanding? Are not the settlements spreading everywhere? Are not the Zionists still controlling Jerusalem and most of the Palestinian territory?

We in the Islamic Resistance Movement-Hamas declare and stress that there is no retreat from the jihad objective. Hamas will approach any dialogue, whether in Khartoum or anywhere else, on this basis.

[Al-Jawlani] Some PA officials are saying that Hamas agreed to hold talks with the PA because it has been weakened by the blows it received from the authority. What is your comment on this? Is this true?

[Ghawshah] Hamas began the dialogue several years ago. We held talks with the PLO and the Fatah Movement several times in Amman, Khartoum, Tunis, and Sanaa. The door to dialogue has always been open. The important thing is whether Hamas has retreated from its policy or strategy.

We are prepared to start the dialogue. From now we say to the PA that it must not rush matters because a dialogue with a movement as important as Hamas among the Palestinian people needs time so that each side can understand the position of the other and try to find a common denominator, if possible.

Hamas is a deeply rooted Islamic popular movement. This is exactly what the secretary of the Israeli Labor Party said in a television interview a few days ago. He said that Hamas is not 10 people carrying out operations, but has deep roots. The PA must understand this well and deal with the movement on this basis. Everyone knows that Hamas has been waging a popular political and militant battle for the past eight years. It has renewed its leaders seven times following arrests and extremely difficult conditions. Hamas has more than 400 detainees in Israeli prisons. More than 800 members have been martyred and thousands wounded. Nevertheless, this movement has not submitted to the Zionist occupation forces, which are much stronger than 'Arafat's authority and police. The PA must not misunderstand Hamas' patience in the face of the PA's repression, oppression, arrests, and torture.

We say to the PA that it must draw the right conclusions and not the deceptive ones. Hamas's roots extend inside and outside Palestine. Its agreement to hold a dialogue cannot be described as a sign of weakness. It is a sign of the movement's keenness to safeguard the Palestinian people's unity.

[Al-Jawlani] There are reports that Hamas is establishing a political party. Some people link the establishment of this party with the autonomy council elections. Some other people say that Hamas will be transformed into a political party. Is this true?

[Ghawshah] Hamas will not be transformed into a political party, in the sense that the entire movement will become a party. We know how much the Zionist and American quarters and those who rotate in their orbits would like that. Containing Hamas politically, folding its resistance and jihad banner, and involving it in the Oslo agreements are their ultimate hope.

Hamas indeed discussed the establishment of a political party more than three years ago. It is no secret that the idea was discussed with the deportees in 1992. Several months ago, the movement's consultative institutions approved the establishment of a political party not to replace Hamas and not to contradict its political program and strategic objectives. It was left for the movement to choose the appropriate time to announce the establishment of this party. The movement's consultative institutions also decided not to participate in the autonomy council elections, because they are connected with the Oslo agreement, which the movement rejects. It regards the elections as one of the mechanics of the Oslo agreement. They are not comprehensive legislative elections open to the Palestinian people at home and abroad, as the movement wants, but are connected with the settlement plans.

Hamas Leader al-Zahhar Interviewed

96AA0047B Kuwait AL-MUJTAMA' in Arabic
31 Oct 95 pp 34-35

[Interview with Hamas leader Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar by 'Ablah al-Jamal in Gaza; date not given — first paragraph is AL-MUJTAMA' introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Much speculation is currently going on in the Palestinian arena regarding Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and its future role under the Self-Rule Authority headed by Yasir 'Arafat. Strong opposition has existed inside and outside Palestine to the PA's [Palestinian Authority] agreements with Israel. The PA's arrest and imprisonment of some Hamas leaders for more than 100 days raised many question marks. Dr. Mahmud al-Zahar is one of the released Hamas leaders who spent more than 100 days in the PA's prisons. AL-MUJTAMA' held the following interview with him on his experience in prison, the various reports about Hamas, and its political and military situations:

[Al-Jamal] Why did the police arrest you? What were the conditions in prison?

[Al-Zahhar] My arrest was an attempt to cause strife and force Hamas into a confrontation with the PA. This was not the first time. The PA carried out several provocative measures. Its forces launched a campaign to collect weapons, opened fire at the mujahidin, as in Bassam 'Isa's case, and arrested and released many Hamas members. I think that these were irresponsible measures, particularly as they were followed by bad imprisonment conditions. In the first 24 hours I was beaten and insulted. Then they held me in solitary confinement, in a cell about 8 by 8 feet, for 50 days. I spent another 55 days with two others. They allowed us to go to the bathroom twice a day. After 45 days of the last period, they allowed us to go out in the sun only for 30 minutes every two days. Sometimes they allowed us to go out every day for the same period. These were the conditions under which I was held.

[Al-Jamal] Why do you think the police have released you? Was this part of the measures to improve the atmosphere between the PA and Hamas in the Gaza Strip?

[Al-Zahhar] You should ask the PA about this. If the purpose was to improve the atmosphere, they should have released all the detainees. I really do not know why the PA has released three and kept 50 others in prison.

[Al-Jamal] How do you evaluate the relations with the PA now. What are the prospects for progress in these relations in the light of the current political developments and the PA and Hamas positions?

[Al-Zahhar] The relations with the PA are frozen. They are neither bad nor good. Each party is on its own. As for the future prospects, we hope that there will be an agreement. There were signs in the past that the PA was not interested in an agreement. These signs included the Falastin Mosque incidents, the cancellation of some agreements regarding these incidents, and the cancellation of the agreement following the murder of Yusri al-Hamas. We do not know whether the PA's current position is tactical or not. We do not know whether the PA honestly wants to reach an agreement with Hamas. We hope that we can reach an agreement with them at the appropriate time.

[Al-Jamal] How do you explain the phenomenon of the establishment of Islamic parties in the Gaza Strip and their support for the PA?

[Al-Zahhar] The establishment of Islamic political parties is designed to weaken the Islamic movement. They are bodies born dead and will not survive. These parties are not being established to support the authority. The PA has its own party, which is Fatah, or the Fida Party, or the Communist Party. It is clear that establishing Islamic parties to replace Hamas will not succeed.

[Al-Jamal] What are Hamas' red lines in its relations with the PA? How do these lines affect Hamas' political and military agenda?

[Al-Zahhar] No comment.

[Al-Jamal] What is the story about Hamas's political party? What are this party's objectives?

[Al-Zahhar] The Islamic movements in all parts of the world have popular political arms. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan has a party called "the Action Front." In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood established alliances with national non-Islamic parties. It raised its banners under different fronts, because the Egyptian authorities have refused to allow it to establish a political party. Hamas might become a party, however, this is not on the agenda now. Whether Hamas will establish a political party, while continuing to exist as it is, and whether this political party would become a popular movement attracting all those who wish to work for Islam, but do not want to be members of Hamas, all I can say is that we still do not have a parties' law nor an elections' law.

[Al-Jamal] Do you think that the Gaza Strip could become another model for relations between the Palestinian forces as in Jordan, or Egypt, or Algeria?

[Al-Zahhar] We hope that the relationship between the Palestinian groups will be good. Dark shadows dominated these relations in the past, however, I do not think that, in the short or long term, they will reach the situation they reached in Egypt or Algeria. Perhaps the relations here will be a mixture of what exists in Jordan and what exists in Egypt between the Muslim Brotherhood and the authority.

[Al-Jamal] Will Hamas suspend its military operations if it felt that they could lead to a confrontation with the PA?

[Al-Zahhar] The issue of military action should be discussed in negotiations between the two sides. They should consider its negative and positive aspects. The movement's decision to continue or suspend its military action can be made after the negotiations and not before.

[Al-Jamal] What is Hamas' position on the issue of elections in the self-rule areas?

[Al-Zahhar] I think that they are cooking up the elections' issue quickly. I heard that the elections will take place before January. We do not have parties. So, who will participate in these elections if we do not have parties to organize and sponsor them? Israel clearly wants a legislative parliament, or a legislative council, or a Palestinian authority council to help Rabin in the elections and give the impression that the Palestinian people have given a mandate to the national authority. The talk about elections in January is unrealistic, particularly as they have postponed the consideration of a parties' law for three months. Furthermore, we still do not have an elections' law. Some people have discussed this law, but not everyone has approved it.

[Al-Jamal] Do you think that the agreements between the PA and Israel can restore something to the Palestinians? What alternative option does the Palestinian opposition have?

[Al-Zahhar] The agreements have only given us a redeployment of the Israeli forces in the occupied areas. What will happen later? This was left for the final negotiations. I think that the agreements have created hotbeds of tension, as in Gaza. Perhaps these hotbeds would be more tense in the West Bank. The area has been divided into three districts. The process of connecting between them is going to be difficult. For example, a person wanting to leave Tulkarm for Bayt Hanina, or from area A to area B, must go through administrative procedures. These could become a burden and cause provocations and tension. I believe that the minimum demands of the Palestinian people have not been achieved in these agreements.

[Al-Jamal] Hamas says that it wants to abort the agreements with Israel, but does not want to clash with the PA. How can the movement abort the agreements without clashing with the authority established to defend and implement them?

[Al-Zahhar] Hamas did not say that it wants to abort the agreements with Israel. It said that it wants to express its opinion on the issue. Some Palestinian and Israeli quarters relied on studies and some pamphlets, whose origin we do not know, to say that the movement could abort the agreements through military operations. Military operations have clearly caused problems, but aborting the agreements might result in civil war. I do not think that Hamas has ever sought a confrontation with the PA. It has always affirmed that it will leave the choice to the Palestinian people, however, I think that what will abort these agreements is their failure to respond to the Palestinian people's ambitions. Even those who signed and supported the agreements will turn against them, because Israel does not want to abide by its agreements.

[Al-Jamal] Where does the Palestinian opposition stand?

[Al-Zahhar] The Palestinian opposition at home is led by Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. The nature of their opposition is military. The other groups rely on political opposition. They are waiting for the elections and the parties to participate in them, however, Hamas clearly leads the opposition now.

[Al-Jamal] What is the future of the alliance of the 10 Palestinian opposition groups?

[Al-Zahhar] According to what I heard, the experiment has been unsuccessful. Although cooperation exists between them, the experiment has been unsuccessful. The groups cannot establish an alternative to what exists in the territories now. Their many meetings have ended with nothing.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Israeli-Palestinian Steering Committee Meeting Held

TA0712122195 Jerusalem Government Press Office in English 6 Dec 95

[Communication issued by the Foreign Ministry spokesman; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Israeli-Palestinian Steering Committee — headed by Foreign Ministry Director-General Uri Savir and Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'], the Palestinian Authority official in charge of economics — held its fourth meeting yesterday (Tuesday), 05.12.96.

The Committee discussed the implementation of the interim agreement and the redeployment. At the meeting, Savir said that "in the next two weeks, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] forces will redeploy outside four sensitive cities and, therefore, an important period in the future relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority lies before us. It is crucial that the positive experience acquired in Janin will also be repeated on the road ahead, and have implications for the continued implementation of the interim agreement."

It was agreed to draw conclusions from the events in the cities of Janin and Qabatiyah, and that each side would do what is necessary to prevent violence and fight terrorism.

Regarding continued implementation of the agreement, it was agreed to begin the deployment of a joint Israeli-Palestinian team for the Christmas events in Bethlehem.

Regarding the safe passages between Gaza and the West Bank, it was decided that there will be a meeting next week between Maj.-Gen. 'Uzi Dayan and General Yahya to discuss essential details, with the aim of opening the passages by the end of the month.

The theft of vehicles was presented as a painful problem which requires a coordinated response by both sides.

The Israelis expressed praise for the Palestinians on their deployment, in anticipation of the elections which are expected to be held on 20.01.96. They also noted the comprehensive and methodical manner in which the Palestinian Authority is carrying out the preparations of voter lists. The Palestinians expressed their great appreciation for Israel's assistance in preparing for the elections.

Similarly, the issue of industrial parks was discussed. The work of the professional teams working on their locations was reviewed, as well as the legal framework and the security arrangements. It was agreed that the preparatory work will be completed by 07.01.96, and that the final plans will be presented at a ministerial-level donors conference that will begin on 09.01.96.

Ross Confers With Israeli-Palestinian Committee

JN0612213495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Supreme Palestinian-Israeli Steering and Supervision Committee held a meeting in occupied Jerusalem this evening with Dennis Ross, the U.S. Middle East peace coordinator. The committee — which is chaired by Economy and Trade Minister Ahmad Quray', also known as Abu-'Ala', on the Palestinian side, and Uri Savir, director general of Israeli Foreign Ministry on the Israeli side — discussed with Ross establishing industrial zones in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in addition to a working paper which will be presented to the donor states conference on Palestine to be held in Paris in January.

At the end of the committees' meeting with Ross, Quray' said the Israeli side is procrastinating in implementing the provisions of the second phase of the Declaration of Principles, particularly those pertaining to the release of male and female prisoners from Israeli occupation prisons.

Algeria

Election Monitoring Chief on Country's Future

LD0612220795 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1917 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Here is the appeal made by Mr. Abdesselam Habachi, chairman of the independent national commission monitoring the presidential elections, to the people and to the elected President Liamine Zeroual at a news conference:

[Begin Habachi recording] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. [passage omitted]

We can say that Algeria is on the right path. I say, with all frankness and in all sincerity: Algeria is well. I have not much to say. The brothers have spoken, and I have just a few words to say: For six months, the commission worked under great pressure, great pressure. We were working from morning to evening, under pressure, pressure from the press, pressure from the candidates, pressure from daily work, pressure from the fear of bloodshed, pressure from criminals who were threatening to kill us, who were sending us threats to cut our throats or to shoot us. The pressure from these threats was on top of that of our work.

What I want to say now is about the recent past, and it is addressed to the evil people in our country. I would tell them: You know how to kill and butcher, and this is the extent of your knowledge. [passage omitted]

Doubts have dispersed. Now, the Algerian people have uttered their word. The political cover under which they were lying to us — that they had 80 percent of the people they had been butchering — was exposed on the day the Algerian people showed them which direction they were taking.

The second point is the exploitation of Islam, and this has disappeared because the people have discovered their lie. What are they left with? The political and religious points have gone. They are left only with the bloodthirsty people. [passage omitted]

Today, we tell them that the situation has changed and the regime has changed. The regime is capable of wiping them out of existence and returning them to the hell from which they came. [passage omitted]

The second point [as heard] concerns those who have been misled. We tell them openly: If courage or fear was what led you to evil, today you should have the courage to return to good deeds, to come back to your kinsfolk, your people, your beloved and your children and wipe off the tears of your mothers and children and be in peace among your people who love peace. [passage omitted]

The people who chose this president should not leave him on his own. How? The people do this by following four steps. Every morning, when one leaves one's home one should think of four things: First, what do I want from this country? Second, what does the country ask of me? Third, where is my right? And, what is my duty to the homeland? I do not need to elaborate on these points; each one of us knows them. [passage omitted]

We are left with one last point, because we do not like to say [word indistinct]. It is an appeal to the president. The children of 1 November are making an appeal to the son of 1 November. We will tell him, Mr. President: What happened in 1962 must not happen now in 1995. The deviations which took place in 1962 must not take place now in 1995. [passage omitted]

The first point is the cleansing of ranks, Mr. President. Mr. President: The Algerian people as a whole would say that people in power must not be other than those who are loyal and prepared to make sacrifices for the homeland and the people. Personal objectives must not exist in future. This is the first point.

The second point is about justice. We are not saying social justice; we will just say justice. Mr. President: The Algerian people are gasping for justice. We do not need a middleman to demand our rights. The law must protect us. This was the second point.

The third point is about bureaucracy, from which we have been suffering for years. The administrative departments must be cleared of bureaucrats who have been tormenting the people over the past 30 years.

Mr. President: This is my appeal. If you are in agreement with the people, they will go with you and, inevitably, the change will come in a sincere way. Above all, the Algerian people love Algeria as much as you love Algeria and the people. We wish you success, and may God give you strength and support you in shaking off this great fever and disease which has afflicted the people. May God have mercy on the martyrs of the past and of the present. Long live Algeria and long live the great Algerian people. Peace be upon you. [end recording]

About 1,000 'Repentant People' Reportedly Surrender

LD0512230495 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The call for clemency made by President Liamine Zeroual to the misled young has been widely echoed among the latter. Information sources said that the number of repentant people who had surrendered to the security services reached about 1,000.

Some of them have made confessions and spoke about how they were recruited into armed groups, and about criminal acts they had perpetrated against security and army men, and against the Algerian people. They have also exposed the methods used by so-called emirs to deceive them and make them kill in the most hideous ways. The repentant people described their lives among the armed groups as hell.

'Mounting Opposition' in FIS to Reconciliation

MM0612143995 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 6 Dec 95 p 6

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "Mounting Opposition Within Islamic Salvation Front Toward Reconciliation Initiative in Algeria"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London — Algerian Islamic sources said that large numbers of Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] leaders and supporters are opposed to the reconciliation initiative toward the Algerian Government by Shaykh Rabah Kebir, chairman of the FIS Executive Committee abroad. The sources explained that the opposition comes basically from some leaders of the Islamic Salvation Army [AIS] in Algeria's central and western regions, in addition to FIS supporters abroad.

In conjunction with the FIS shaykhs freed in Algeria, Shaykh Kebir had extended the hand of reconciliation to President Liamine Zeroual. In a letter to the new Algerian president elected on 16 November, he urged cooperation in order to save the country from the crisis that has prevailed since early 1992.

Sources in the Executive Committee have stressed that Kebir's initiative, undertaken in conjunction with the leaders in Algeria, aims at seizing the opportunity to resolve the crisis, and that "it is better to support Zeroual in confronting the hard-liners within the military institution than to leave him weak to face the advocates of the security solution." The sources point out that the initiative comes within the context of the FIS' constant policy of trying to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

However, following its announcement, Kebir's position has raised some reservations in FIS circles abroad. Anouar Haddam, leader of the parliamentary delegation in Washington, mounted a violent campaign against the Executive Committee chairman, saying that to renounce the "sacrifices" of the armed groups during the past years is "treason." Although Haddam's position was expected, since he supports union between the FIS and the Armed Islamic Group [GIA] under the GIA's banner (contrary to Kebir) and since he left the Executive Committee following a disagreement, what was not expected was the extent of the opposition to the letter among FIS circles abroad which normally support Rabah Kebir.

The most violent position comes from those outside Algeria who are opposed to the letter and is stated in the AL-TABSIRAH bulletin issued by "the Algerian community in Britain, supporters of the FIS and its Islamic Army." In its 1 December issue, under the headline "This Is Not How You Drive Camels, Rabah," the bulletin said: "We were surprised, indeed, shocked" by the letter addressed to Zeroual, and criticized him [Kebir] violently, saying: "What is this? Have you lost your senses, or have you forgotten yourself?" Although AL- TABSIRAH is not the FIS organ in Britain (AL-SABIL is published by the FIS), its position has raised questions about the level of support for Kebir among FIS supporters abroad, bearing in mind that this bulletin previously was one of the staunchest supporters of the Executive Committee chairman, defending him against criticism by the AL-ANSAR bulletin published by GIA supporters.

A similar position to AL-TABSIRAH's is also by AL-QADIYAH, published in Europe by FIS candidates who were successful in the canceled 1991 elections.

In addition to AL-TABSIRAH and AL-QADIYAH, those opposed to the letter say that Shaykh Kebir's initiative has caused much dissatisfaction in the AIS. The oppositionists stress that the AIS command in the western region knew nothing of the initiative, and received it by fax only after it was issued. They add that leaders of armed groups attached to the AIS in the western region (under the leadership of Ahmed Ben Aisha) have declared their opposition to the letter, and criticized especially the fact that they were not consulted on its content before it was sent. The same sources quoted leaders of armed groups supporting the FIS in the central Algerian region as saying that they are also opposed to the letter.

With regard to the position of the eastern region leadership, traditionally the closest to the Executive Committee, AL-HAYAH has information to the effect that it has not adopted a position either in support of the letter or against it. The information also indicates that the AIS leadership in eastern Algeria (under the leadership of Madani Mezrak) is waiting for the government's response to the initiative of "extending the hand of reconciliation" toward it. If the response is positive, the Salvation Army will adopt a position supporting the letter, but if it is negative, the AIS will take a similarly negative position.

While awaiting the government's response to the FIS initiative, it was noticed that the GIA has maintained a silence with regard to what is currently happening in the country. The AL-ANSAR bulletin, known for its close links to the GIA, mounted a violent attack in its last issue on Shaykh Rabah, his initiative, and the FIS. It wondered why Kebir sent his letter to Zeroual and urged people "to repudiate" the FIS and join the GIA.

Some Algeria watchers have said that by adopting a positive initiative toward the FIS, President Zeroual's government would provide more opportunities for the FIS "political leaders" to prevail on their supporters among members of the armed groups to accept a solution relevant to the situation in Algeria and the outcome of the elections, which showed a clear popular support for the president and a disregard for the call last month by the opposition (including the FIS) to boycott the elections.

Security Forces Kill 20 'Criminals'

LD0612192795 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The security services today announced that during an extensive combing operation on 2 December in Boukendil area in Tlemcen, the security forces were able to determine the location of a large group comprising 20 criminals. The security forces' attack led to the killing of all the members of the group and the seizing of a quantity of arms and ammunition.

Egypt

Peres Arrives for Talks on Advancing Peace Process

NC0712101095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0933 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Dec (MENA) — Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and his delegation arrived in Cairo this morning on a visit to Egypt of several hours.

Peres was received at the airport by Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi and the Israeli ambassador in Cairo.

This is Peres' first visit to Egypt since becoming Israel's prime minister.

The visit precedes a trip to the United States, where he will hold talks with U.S. officials on ways to advance the peace process on all the negotiating tracks.

President Mubarak is expected to see the Israeli prime minister later. The talks will concentrate on ways to advance the Middle East peace process, especially on the Syrian track.

Comments on Talks With Syria

NC0712111495 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1032 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Dec (MENA) — Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has stated that Egypt is playing a role to facilitate peace negotiations on every track and that the United States is mediating to advance negotiations between Israel and Syria.

In statements after arriving in Cairo today, Peres denied recent reports that Israel made concessions regarding the establishment of early-warning stations in the Golan. He said the Israeli Government did not discuss this issue. Israel's position on the idea of these stations is firm, he said.

Peres said he is now visiting Cairo to discuss all the issues on the table before his trip to the United States on Saturday [9 December]. He said the next stage concerns issues of multidimensional interest to the entire region.

Peres stressed that his government will continue to work on the solid foundations laid by his predecessor, Yitzhaq Rabin. He pointed out that having assumed the premiership, "many problems" are now being confronted on the economic, political, and security levels.

Peres said his talks with King Husayn of Jordan yesterday were characterized by understanding. He said he explained to the Jordanian monarch his expectations regarding the implementation of the agreement with the Palestinians and the conditions for resuming negotiations with the Syrians. He said the issue of resuming the negotiations with Syria is undecided, but he added that there is now a chance.

Asked whether he will discuss with President Husni Mubarak the pending problems between Egypt and Israel, Peres said it is useful to "clear the negotiating table between the two countries."

Paper Criticizes Israeli Bid for Pact With U.S.

NC0712071595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0605 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Dec (MENA) — AL-AHRAM stresses that the near-complete agreement on a defense pact between Israel and the United States reveals Israel thinking, which is essentially based on imposing peace by force and dictating conditions to the other sides to the conflict.

In a commentary today, the paper says this shows the huge difference between the Arab view of peace, which is based on achieving an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and resolving the issues of Jerusalem and the refugees, and the Israeli view, which sees the process as a limited withdrawal from part of the territories, while imposing full Israeli hegemony over them, and as an opportunity to expand into Arab markets.

The paper calls on Israel to stop all this and urges at least an agreement that should not be relinquished, thus ensuring that the current settlement process continues.

Musa Views Peace Tracks, Bosnia Accord

NC0612190795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1740 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Dec (MENA) — Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has stated that the ongoing activities and developments on the various peace tracks are optimistic, especially regarding the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement and the reactivation of the Syrian track.

In statements today, the foreign minister said Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' will visit Cairo tomorrow, before he visits Washington. He noted that U.S. Coordinator Dennis Ross, who is currently visiting the region, also will arrive in Cairo tomorrow. He said that these developments show the possibility of making further progress in the peace process.

Responding to a question on Egypt inviting Hamas [Palestinian Islamic Movement] leaders to visit Cairo, Musa said that they will meet in Cairo. He added that the Palestinians continue to visit Egypt because it is always open for them.

Regarding Egyptian contacts with the Pakistani Government, Musa said: I can say nothing new now, however, the Pakistani foreign minister will visit Cairo later this month to attend the meetings of the Joint Egyptian-Pakistani Committee. This was agreed upon before the Egyptian Embassy bombing.

The foreign minister said that the Islamic Contact Committee on Bosnia will meet in Paris on 13 December. This meeting will be followed by a joint meeting of the Islamic and international contact committees on Bosnia.

Musa said he will take part in a meeting to be held in London on 8 December. The meeting will discuss issues concerning implementing the Bosnia peace agreement that had been worked out in Dayton. Musa noted that he will participate in the signing ceremony of the final agreement in Paris on 14 December.

Commenting on ASEAN's determination to sign a treaty to render its region a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and the significance of this on the Middle East, the foreign minister said: They [ASEAN countries] have no problems, but we here have an obstacle, namely Israel. He said that ASEAN countries signed the treaty due to the well-known nuclear activities in the Pacific Ocean. He is referring to France's nuclear tests.

The foreign minister noted that the Israeli stand will not only be an obstacle toward the region being nuclear free, but also in every meeting. Any discussion, he said, concerning regional security will fail unless Israel changes its position, reiterating Egypt's position in this regard.

Prime Minister Says Elections 100% Fair

NC0612123195 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1105 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Interview with Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi by Ahmad al-Hillawi on 6 December; place not given — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Hillawi] Runoff elections are being held today. Has the Operations Room received any complaints?

[Sidqi] Nothing at all so far. Thank God things are going smoothly. Maybe one complaint in the (Dibbin) area, where investigation is currently taking place. They caught people with bombs called molotov cocktails, bottles that are filled with kerosene, petrol, and rags, otherwise the situation is good.

[Al-Hillawi] What do runoff elections in all governorates signify?

[Sidqi] Mainly the reason is the large number of candidates and the high voter turnout we saw when the candidates names were announced. About 4,000 candidates contested 444 seats in 222 constituencies, and we said this was a positive sign. I still say it is a positive sign. Due to scattered votes, a large number of candidates did not win 50 percent of votes and this was the main reason for the rerun.

[Al-Hillawi] And the elections' democracy and fairness.

[Sidqi] No, these are taken for granted. Personally, I do not believe that the talk uttered here or there in the opposition newspapers has any basis. On the contrary, the government stayed very far from the electoral process itself. Most of the incidents during the elections occurred between the candidates themselves with supporters of one candidate turning against other candidates' supporters and so forth. Yet I can say that the elections have been 100 percent fair and that the government was 100 percent neutral. The government promoted no one nor did it pressure anyone in any way.

Information Minister Declares Elections 'Impartial'

NC0612174195 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif has declared today's runoff elections a the real elections because they involved more than 70 percent of the People's Assembly seats. He pointed out that that means there was high voter turnout and strong competition in the first round. He added that this competitive spirit was clear during the runoff as well.

Speaking after he cast his vote today, al-Sharif said that this proves without a doubt that the elections were democratic, impartial, and honest. He said that no political observer could have expected such an extensive runoff contest.

Regarding an Administrative Court order to suspend the interior minister's announcement on the election results in 39 constituencies, the information minister said that it is natural for candidates to challenge the results. He said the Justice Ministry will submit legal briefs on the challenges and the cases will be settled in court, adding that the decisions by the courts will be final.

The information minister explained that these legal procedures will not delay the opening of the new parliamentary term. [passage omitted]

Al-Sharif stated that the government has adopted a position of total neutrality and has sought to keep the elections impartial because it wants a parliament that genuinely represents the people's wishes, regardless of their party affiliation. He regretted that some people accused the government of intervening in the elections, saying that this is contrary to the facts. Declaring that some circles are trying to distort the image of Egyptian democracy abroad, he said these people prepare reports and then take them to international seminars. He said this suspiciously resembles a prior conspiracy. [passage omitted]

He stated: We will not allow anyone to intervene in the elections. They are being conducted under popular and judicial supervision and are fully impartial. We must have an honest competition and criticize each other in a constructive way.

Election Polls Close; Vote Count Begins

NC0612183695 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1702 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Dec (MENA) — Voting in the People's Assembly runoff elections in 30,000 polling stations in 174 constituencies spread over 26 governorates ended at 1700 today. Only Marsa Matruh Governorate did not hold a runoff contest because the first round's results were decisive.

All ballot boxes were sealed in the presence of representatives of the election committees' chairmen and then transported under heavy guard to the general committees' headquarters to begin the vote count and determine the results. The results will then be relayed to the Interior Ministry's central operations room. This is expected to begin late tonight.

Several Deaths Reported in Election Day Incidents

NC0612195495 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Today's parliamentary runoff elections were accompanied by riots and disturbances in several constituencies. In Disuq, a town in Kafr al-Shaykh Governorate, clashes among the supporters of several candidates led to the death of a citizen, 'Ala' Jamal-al-Din; eight other people were wounded.

In Qina, four people died and eight others were wounded in a clash among the supporters of several candidates in the province's ninth constituency. One of the dead was 'Umar Muhammad Fahmi 'Umar, the son of the National Democratic Party's [NDP] candidate for the professionals seat.

At a polling station in Minshat Dahshur in al-Badrashayn District, certain persons opened fire on the supporters of the NDP candidate, killing one citizen, Ahmad Abu-Talib Siddiq.

About 2,000 inhabitants of al-May village assembled in front of the polling stations in Shibin al-Kawm to express support for independent candidate Sa'd Muhammad Yusuf, a member of the disbanded Muslim Brotherhood who was contesting the workers seat. They were preparing to storm the polling stations and fill out the ballots in favor of their candidate. Security forces dealt with them, the crowd was dispersed, and police control was established in the area.

In Shibin al-Qanatir, the supporters of one candidate stormed the town's courthouse, which was being used as a polling station. They were confronted by the supporters of the rival candidate. The clash led to the death of the citizen Ahmad Barakat al-Wakil. Nine others were wounded.

The Interior Ministry has announced that the riots have ended and the situation has been brought under control. In a statement today, the Ministry said that apart from these limited and scattered incidents, the People's Assembly runoff elections were conducted in total calm and impartiality.

Further on Election Violence

NC0712070995 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2242 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Dec (MENA) — Twelve people were killed in yesterday's runoff election for the People's Assembly. Six people were killed in the al-Ra'isiyah constituency in Markaz Naja' Hammadi, Qina Governorate, Upper Egypt, and three in Markaz Abu Hammad, al-Sharqiyah Governorate. One person was killed in Markaz al-Badrashayn in al-Jizah, one in Shibin al-Qanatir in al-Qalubiyah, and one in Disuq in Kafr al-Shaykh.

Among the victims was 'Umar Fahmi 'Umar, the son of Fahmi 'Umar, a former director of Egyptian radio, former People's Assembly member for the National Democratic Party [NDP], and the NDP candidate in Naja' Hammadi. Fahmi 'Umar suffered a severe heart attack when he heard of his son's death and was taken to hospital in bad shape.

Some 29 people were injured in the various constituencies across the Republic.

All the deaths came in exchanges of fire or clashes among candidate supporters. The security forces brought the clashes to an end.

'More Than 700' Opposition Supporters Arrested

NC0612180395 Paris AFP in English
1631 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 6 (AFP) — More than 700 campaign workers and supporters of opposition parties were arrested on Wednesday [6 December] during a run-off vote in Egyptian legislative elections, a human rights group told AFP.

"Most of those arrested belonged to the Moslem Brotherhood. The others were followers either of independents or (leftist) Nasserites," Hisham Mubarak, head of the Legal Aid Center for Human Rights (LACHR), said.

The arrests took place in the Nile Delta areas of al-Buhayrah, al-Daqahliyah, al-Mahallah and al-Sharqiyah, north of the capital, as well as in Cairo and Alexandria, Mubarak said.

Police have said 78 were arrested during the poll on Wednesday.

Mubarak also said his rights group have received over "550 complaints of voting violations" most from the opposition concerning the stuffing of ballot boxes by the ruling National Democratic party (NDP).

Mubarak said eight opposition candidates had decided to withdraw from the vote "to protest fraud": seven from the Brotherhood and one from their allies, the Liberal party.

The Liberal party candidate, Mustafa Bakri, told a press conference that police "intervened with force" on behalf of his rival, Religious Affairs Minister Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub.

"I pulled out so that my withdrawal would prove the massacre of democracy in Egypt," Bakri said.

Opposition Leaders To Discuss Election 'Excesses'

NC0612200895 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1820 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Dec (MENA) — Liberal Party leader Mustafa Kamil Murad has stated that he will hold contacts with opposition party leaders to discuss their views on the People's Assembly elections. At a news conference today, he said the election process witnessed "various excesses" that deserve study and the adoption of a position to strengthen the democratic process in the country.

Mustafa Bakri, Liberal Party candidate for Hulwan al-Tabbin, who announced his withdrawal from the contest today, spoke at the conference. he said that he walked out because "the supporters of his rival, Dr. Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub, attacked his representatives and supporters in the constituency."

Paper Criticizes U.S. 'Insult' Over Elections

MM0712102895 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 6 Dec 95 p 1

[Article by 'Abd-al-Bari 'Atwan: "Another U.S. Insult to Egypt"]

[FBIS Translated Text] For the U.S. Administration to officially request that the Egyptian Government launch an investigation into the accusations made by the opposition as regards the Egyptian elections is the ugliest kind of interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. This would not have happened had there been a patriotic government in Cairo that respected itself and was aware of the weight of its country and its great human cultural heritage going back at least 7,000 years.

Such a request, which lacks any taste, is an insult not just to the government, but also the opposition, some of whose factions complained to the U.S. Embassy, urging it to intervene to stop the blatant rigging farce, which is now known to everyone.

Regrettably, most Arab opposition factions, not just the Egyptian ones, are now competing among themselves and also with their governments over how to befriend the White House and its occupants in order to win their approval in the hope of reaching power in their countries. And they see no harm in dealing with U.S. intelligence organs or those representing them to achieve this aim.

It is difficult for us to clear the Egyptian Government of the accusation of encouraging the U.S. Administration to interfere in its domestic affairs and criticize election rigging. Not only because it has — as usual — committed the sin of rigging the elections, but also because it has failed to understand world and regional political changes and the scale of U.S. influence over them.

When the U.S. Administration opposes election rigging, it does so not because of its affection for the opposition or its eagerness to secure for it the largest possible number of seats in the parliament, but because it knows that this is the only way to prolong the life of the regime in Cairo so that it can continue to play its role in confronting fundamentalist violence and boosting the Israeli peace process in the region. It seems that the decisionmakers in Cairo failed to understand the gist of this message and ignored U.S. orientations, so there had to be interference to put the elections in their correct framework, just one day before the runoffs.

The Egyptian Government — if it wanted to put a limit to this U.S. pressure and interference — could have done the opposite and used the opposition's success in the elections to form a strong national parliament that would reinforce the independence of Egyptian decisionmaking, strengthen national unity, and confront the creeping Hebrew era.

Regrettably, the ruling establishment in Cairo, which has been in a state of alarm since the Addis Ababa incident, has worked to weaken itself by weakening the opposition and ensuring the defeat of all its strong symbols in the first round of the elections, without taking account of the dangers of this short-sighted approach to the country's present, its future, and its standing at the Arab and international level.

As is known, preventing the opposition — religious or secular — from participating in political life and decisionmaking through the parliament is bound to serve extremism and support the views of those urging armed underground action to bring about change in power. The Algerian example confirms this theory.

The Egyptian Government's abandonment of its leading role, its unjustifiable contentment with a back seat in the regional leadership vehicle, and its gradual abandonment of leadership in favor of the growing Hebrew role, are the sum of all Egypt's disasters and those of the region as a whole. If this defect continues, there is no imminent rescue from the current state of collapse.

It is illogical for successive Egyptian governments since President al-Sadat's visit to occupied Jerusalem in 1977 to work to promote the Hebrew peace, try to persuade other states of the benefits of normalization, and exert great pressure on the Palestinians to accept a settlement not based on the UN and Security Council resolutions, while they [the government] continue to insist on maintaining the starvation blockade imposed on Iraq because it has not implemented the Security Council resolutions fully.

It is unacceptable for the Egyptian Government to give its blessing for the destruction of all Iraqi nuclear programs — without obtaining any assurances that Israel would join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and open its nuclear plants to international inspection teams — and then suddenly wake up to stage a campaign in this connection, on which it backtracked in a humiliating manner after the first U.S. threat to suspend foreign aid.

It is these serious concessions that have encouraged Washington to interfere in its internal affairs and turned its embassy in Cairo into the real ruler of the country — the ruler that determines its economic and military policies and the type of regional and international alliances it should forge.

When Glyn Davies, spokesman for the U.S. State Department, says that "some Egyptian parties could not present their programs to the Egyptians...we noted that the opposition was harassed by the arrest or trial of its activists...we have been informed of government interference in the election process," all these statements, and in such a manner, could only be made by a high commissioner or a minister for colonial affairs in Great Britain in its golden era when the sun never set on its empire.

Egypt needs democracy and honest elections, not because the United States wants them, but because that is the only means to put an end to Arab and U.S. interference in its affairs. And to prevent it from being turned into a "banana republic" whose destiny is controlled by the White House today and the Hebrew state tomorrow.

Libya

Leader's Son Said Linked to Counterfeiting Scheme

MS0512143195 London THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH in English 26 Nov 95 p 32

[Report by Con Couglin: "Qadhdhafi's Son Linked To Sting On Iran"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Like father, like son. Barely in his twenties, the eldest son of the Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, is winning himself a reputation as an untrustworthy maverick after being linked to an outrageous plan to flood Iran with fake currency.

Had it not been for the vigilance of the Egyptian banking authorities, the Iranian economy would now be awash with fake rials, the national currency, and the perpetrators of the sting would be enjoying the fruits of a multi-million-dollar fortune.

The plan was foiled only after Egyptian officials discovered that Sayf al-Qadhdhafi was behind a plan to convert billions of dinars, one of the world's less attractive currencies, into more widely accepted American dollars.

Although young al-Qadhdhafi himself had done nothing wrong in trying to set up the banking deal in Cairo, residual Egyptian suspicions about anything to do with the al-Qadhdhafi regime persuaded the bankers to pass up a golden opportunity to earn themselves a lucrative commission.

By so doing, they inadvertently ruined a bizarre scheme to purchase millions of dollars worth of fake rials that would, in turn, have been sold back to Iran's ayatollahs, further destabilising the country's battered economy.

"If they'd been successful, this operation would have made the Great Train Robbery look like a teddy-bears' picnic," said a British banking official who acted as consultant to the Egyptians. "If the Egyptians had agreed to go through with the deal, the next step would have been to use it for an elaborate operation to flood Tehran with fake rials.

The operation involved the Vienna-headquarters of Bandaran, an Iranian import export company that tries to sell Iran's surplus oil supplies on the international black market.

Bandaran is run from Tehran by Dr. Abbaspour Tehrani Fahd, one of President Rafsanjani's closest advisers and the man responsible for Iran's crushingly expensive programme to develop chemical weapons.

To finance the project, Dr Fahd is given large quantities of oil that is surplus to Iran's OPEC oil quota. The oil is sold on the black market and the profits are used by Bandaran to finance the purchase of equipment for the chemical weapons programme.

Bandaran's Vienna office is the main outlet for the oil sales, which generate vast sums of cash.

In one transaction alone, which was negotiated earlier this year, Bandaran made more than 100 million pounds from the sale of a cargo of 80 million barrels of oil on the black market.

The Vienna office plays a vital role in helping the mullahs to alleviate the harsh effects of economic sanctions.

Like Iran, Libya is also suffering the effects of economic sanctions imposed because of Colonel al-Qadhdhafi's refusal to hand over two suspects wanted in connection with the Lockerbie bombing seven years ago.

As part of a ploy to generate much needed dollars, al-Qadhdhafi authorised Sayf to negotiate a complicated deal with Bandaran whereby the Iranians and Libyans agreed to work together on a multi-million-dollar money-laundering deal.

The first step in this complicated formula was to draw the equivalent of $8 billion from a group of banks in Cairo, in return for which the Libyans agreed to pay the Egyptians an equivalent sum in Libyan dinars.

At first the Egyptians, who stood to make a handsome profit, were tempted by the deal. But before they granted authorisation, the banker's made some discreet inquiries about who was behind the scheme.

When they discovered that Al-Qadhdhafi's 23-year-old son was involved, they decided the venture was too risky and pulled out.

One of the reasons they decided to abandon the deal was that, in the course of their investigations, the bankers discovered that an Iranian businessman intended to use the vast amounts of money involved in the deal to launder fake Iranian currency.

For reasons that have still not been satisfactorily explained, billions of dollars of fake Iranian rials have been produced in the Far East.

The Iranian middleman, most probably without young al-Qadhdhafi's knowledge, intended to purchase large quantities of these fake rials. The next step in the sting operation required Bandaran to sell a multi-million-dollar consignment of black market oil.

Once the transaction went through, the Iranian intended to substitute the fake rials, while pocketing the dollar payment himself.

If the plan had worked he would have to worry about working again, while Dr Fahd would unwittingly have polluted the Iranian economy with fake currency.

The Iranian's dreams of making a killing have been ruined, for the moment at least, because of the resourcefulness of the Egyptian bankers.

Now the international banking community has been warned to be on its guard in case another attempt is made to exploit the desperation of both Iran and Libya to acquire foreign earnings.

In particular they have been told to be on the look-out for enterprising young Al-Qadhdhafis bearing gifts.

Iranian Ambassador Holds Talks With al-Muntasir

LD0612093595 Tehran IRNA in English 2058 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, Dec. 5, IRNA — In a meeting here on Tuesday [5 December] between Iranian ambassador to Tripoli Nuri Shahrudi and Libyan Secretary for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation 'Umar al-Muntasir, the two sides underscored further promotion of bilateral cooperation. In the meeting, the Iranian ambassador voiced Iran's readiness to implement economic projects in Libya in the fields of oil, gas and petrochemical industries.

'Umar al-Muntasir told Iranian official that his country and Iran as two Muslim countries should enhance their overall relations.

UK, U.S. Involvement in Sudan Meeting Denounced

LD0512215195 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] An official source at the Secretariat of the General People's Committee for Unity has made the following statement:

With great concern we have followed up the meeting on 29 and 30 November of a number of Sudanese figures, under the official umbrella of the English House of Lords at its official headquarters, and with the attendance of a number of its members and those of the House of Commons. The meeting was held with American participation, and by a number of European countries and official envoys from African countries in order to make practical arrangements for the implementation of a conspiratorial plan against the brotherly Sudanese people, interfering in its internal affairs, undermining its decisions, and fueling sedition among its people.

While we denounce this conspiratorial move and condemn the participation of the Sudanese figures, whom we are surprised to see taking part alongside the Western circles conspiring against the unity of their homeland and people, we stress that this plotting against Sudan is similar to the schemes which the Arab nation is experiencing, which target the basis of its unity, its sovereignty, and the aspiration of its people for unity and progress.

Morocco

Islamist Prisoners on Hunger Strike Since 1 Nov

LD0612095095 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In Morocco, six Islamist prisoners have had a letter smuggled out. It says that they have been on hunger strike since 1 November to protest the fact that they have been remanded in jail despite the amnesty for political prisoners announced by King Hassan II.

Students, Security Forces Clash; Several Injured

LD0612142195 Rabat MAP in English 1411 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Dec. 06 (MAP) — Several persons were injured in clashes between students and security agents at the El Jadida university campus (south of Casablanca).

Moroccan daily RISSALAT AL OUMA that reported the news said the clash broke when a security agent attacked a student.

Graduates Association Protests Unemployment

96AF0005A Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 15 Nov 95 pp 47-48

[Article by Bahia Amrani: "Despair's Career Prospects"]

[FBIS Translated Text] *Morocco: Fourteen hundred young unemployed university graduates are trying to get the powers that be to listen to them.*

It is certainly not the first time that young unemployed university graduates have demonstrated to draw attention to their dramatic situation. But the economic climate has become so ominous that each day their horizons shrink a bit more. The 1,400 young people who, responding to the appeal from the Association of Unemployed University Graduates (ANDC), had camped out at the headquarters of the Moroccan Labor Union [UMT] for more than 10 days, were not unaware of this. But they were betting on the massive nature of their movement to make things go. It was, in fact, no longer a matter of a demonstration by category, like the sit-in that was organized several weeks ago by young scientific workers, but rather a mobilization of all those affected, regardless of the type of their diploma and their place of residence.

In fact the Association rallied the troops in all of its 121 chapters that cover all of the regions. There was one rallying cry: the demand that unemployment overall be dealt with. "We're not here to get promises of employment aimed just at people taking part in the sit-in," explained Smail Iziad, the executive board's secretary general. "We want basic reforms for an overall solution." With Morocco seeming to get ready to be involved in reforms at all levels, the Association has found this an opportune moment to speak up. And also to achieve its main priority: legal recognition.

The Association, which was founded on 26 October 1991 in Casablanca, is a very active one: it holds an annual convention and it regularly changes its executive board by adding nine new members and its central coordinating committee, which brings together its sections' elected leaders. But since it is not recognized, it regularly sees its public demonstrations banned and, if not, broken up by police. In 1993, 14 of its members were arrested and sentenced in Guercif (in the Eastern Province) and, last September, 26 other young university graduates from the Center-West region were called in for questioning and their cases referred to the El-Jadida court. The Association has also decried the death of one of its members, Mustapha Hamzaoui, who died at police headquarters in Khenifra in 1993.

By manipulating the carrot and the stick, the authorities are trying to avoid a stand-off. The Guercif "fourteen," who initially had been sentenced to two years in jail, saw their sentences reduced to two months and a reprieve, whereas the El-Jadida "twenty-six," who had initially received six months, got reprieves.

In Rabat, at the same time as the sit-in, the young university graduates conducted their first hunger fast on 18 October and began a second one—to last 48 hours—on the 21st. That same day, having been received by the Minister of Human Rights, the ANDC's delegates brought up just one single point: a demand which, they explain, can immediately be satisfied no matter how little political determination there might be.

Similarly it is political determination, the ANDC's members have stated, that will determine how unemployment by university graduates will be cut. "We are not stopping at condemning this unemployment, we're proposing measures that would help resolve the problem," said Smail Iziad, who summarized his association's proposals. While not being prejudicial to educational reforms which, in theory, are supposed to be the subject of a general debate, the ANDC's memorandum suggests cutting out overtime in education, the cost of which, according to the young unemployed university graduates, works out to be the equivalent of 12,000 budgeted positions. The Association also advocates eliminating the practice of doubling and tripling duties, the more effective use by local communities and the private sector of the positions granted, and greater rigor in the collection of taxes, with a portion of these additional receipts being earmarked to help young people who are unemployed to reenter the job market. "Our demands would cost the state nothing. On the contrary, they would earn it some money. In any event, this thinking must be started on an urgent basis. Some of us have reached a stage of despair. They haven't worked for several years, so the only thing left for them to do is die or steal in order to survive."

"It's a desperate situation!"; such is the leitmotif of hundreds of young people all of whom have a story to tell and with their identities not concealed. Such is the case of Zahhara Abderrahim, 28, who received his degree in Arabic literature in 1993. To help his father, a retired soldier taking care of five other children whose educations are completed, Abderrahim left his family's home in Ouazzane (in the Northern Province). He settled in Kenitra, shared a room with a friend, the rent for which he pays, with difficulty, and he applies for every opening; the opening at the regional school aimed at primary school teaching candidates; the one at the CPR [expansion not given], which selects teachers for the freshman and sophomore years; and the one at the ENES [expansion not given], for junior and senior years. He is ready to accept any offer, and has filed his application with several ministries, in particular the ones that were established the most recently, such as the ministries of human rights and the environment. As he waits for fate to smile on him, he makes do with odd jobs: a car guard, a dishwasher in Kenitra's cafes, etc. Since 1994 his chances have been further reduced. Under the new rules for job applications, CPR and ENES applicants must have earned their diplomas with distinction whereas the age limit to enter the regional school is now 21. Zahhara Abderrahim has no plans for his future. His only hope lies with the Association, whose Kenitra chapter he runs. As a former National Union of Moroccan Students [UNEM] militant, his spark returns when he describes and explains the predicament he and his fellows share.

Bromi Farida, 30, is married and the mother of a little girl aged four. The holder of a two-year university degree in general philosophy which she earned in Fes in 1990, she has no chances of getting a job. She does however need to work. Her husband, a primary school teacher, was assigned to Ketama, 300 kilometers from the couple's home. There he has one room, just as do the other teachers. Farida did try to stay with her husband, to cut costs. But how would three people live in a single room in that rural area which has no water or electricity? After three months Farida and her young daughter returned home, to El-Hajeb, where they share her husband's meager salary. With her father and mother deceased, she can expect nothing from anyone. Like her, her brother, who holds a B.A. in economics, and her sister, who has a B.A. in general philosophy, are unemployed. Also a former UNEM militant, Farida runs the ANDC's chapter in El-Hajeb.

Frakso Hamid, 28, is no better off with his B.A. in history and geography. After having earned it in 1991, he naturally signed up for graduate work to improve his chances, but, needing money, he dropped out. While living in Fes, he had to go to Rabat for his file and, there being no scholarship (none provided for for that sequence), he could not pay for these frequent trips. Hamid cannot ask his father, a teacher who must care for eight other children, for anything. Having married a university girlfriend who became a school teacher in 1990, Hamid applied for about 20 openings. Nothing happened. While "forgetting" history and geography, he has had to accept odd jobs such as selling telephone cards retail. He even tried to launch himself in the smuggled goods business. He would do his errands in the northern part of the country, in Ksar Kebir, where there is a lot of Spanish merchandise, and used to resell these products in the souks on the outskirts of Fes. After two months, having understood that he lacked the skills to engage in the illegal trade, he handed out advertising flyers for a big department store. His monthly salary was 600 dirhams (350 French francs). The precarious nature of his situation finally destroyed his home. A founding member of the ANDC, he runs the Menzel chapter (in the Fes region).

Tourbi Amina, born in 1963, and the holder of a degree in Arabic literature, has also tried everything. Nowadays she no longer has the fortitude to apply for any opening. "It's always the same! 10,000 apply but only a handful of candidates gets picked. And fate is never on the side of the poor," she said. Amina, who was registered for her junior and senior years in Rabat, had to pull out after one year of commuting (she lives in Meknes) and still lives with her retired father, as do eight of her brothers and sisters. She does however dream of finding a job to help her family, following the example of her ninth brother, a mechanic.

Oudra Mohamed, an executive board member, summed it up: "We have all experienced the same disappointments but we also have the same hopes. We want to live decently, look after our needs, and help our families. We studied for this but our diplomas don't help us in any way. So what are we supposed to do?" Elayar Mohamed, with a B.A. in English literature, concluded: "Together we hope we can find a solution. For most of us there's no alternative. Our hope is here."

Some officials visited the sit-in participants, who in addition have received the support of every political and trade union organization. But will promises be enough for the young unemployed people, who are demanding that their association be recognized and that a serious dialogue start?

With a meeting with the authorities supposed to take place in mid-November, on 27 October protesters decided to end their movement at the national level. But actions are supposed to continue at the regional level.

GCC Summit Concludes; Final Statement Issued

Oman's Qabus Addresses Closing Session

JN0612150495 Muscat Sultanate of Oman Television Network in Arabic 1138 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Speech by Sultan Qabus of Oman at the closing session of the GCC Supreme Council Summit at the Bustan Palace Hotel in Muscat — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Praise be to God. Peace and blessings be on Prophet Muhammad and his virtuous companions.

Brothers, their highnesses leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], their highnesses and their excellencies members of the delegations.

At the end of the GCC Supreme Council's 16th session, it is a pleasure to express my deep thanks and appreciation as well my extreme pride in this meeting, which brought the brothers together in the Sultanate of Oman, which is happy to host them.

Our brotherly meetings and discussions held during these meetings, expressed the deep and close relations between the GCC states. This is something natural since our peoples are linked together by close ties of amicability and brotherhood and a joint history. It is only appropriate that those peoples, who are linked by all these ties, consolidate their efforts and cooperate to build a prosperous and bright future that pulsates with life and hope.

The spirit, which prevailed during these meetings, and the desire to develop our experience in a way that reinforces the confidence of the Gulf citizen in the need for us to cooperate confirms that continuing the march, broadening its horizons, and diversifying its fields as well as involving the citizens in its responsibilities and results will undoubtedly lead to more solidarity among our peoples, God willing. We hope that this march will add new gains that will serve everyone with the help of Almighty God. At the end of this session, we wish you all a safe return and much success.

In conclusion, we cannot but express our thanks to and appreciation for their highnesses and their excellencies members of the delegations. We particularly thank his highness the secretary general and his assistants and all those working at the GCC General Secretariat for their sincere contributions which ensured the success of this session.

We ask God to guide us and grant the march of cooperation more success.

May God's peace and blessings be upon you.

Summit Final Statement Issued

JN0612132295 Muscat Sultanate of Oman Television Network in Arabic 1143 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Final statement issued at the end of the 16th GCC Supreme Council Summit in Muscat; read by GCC Secretary General Fahim Bin-Sultan al-Qasimi—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, sultan of Oman: The Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] of the Arabian Gulf states held its 16th session in the Sultanate of Oman from 12 to 14 Rajab 1416 Hegira, corresponding to 4 to 6 December 1995 under the chairmanship of His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, sultan of Oman, and in the presence of His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates; His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the State of Bahrain; His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, Saudi crown prince, first deputy prime minister, and head of the Saudi National Guard; His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, amir of the State of Qatar; and His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, amir of the State of Kuwait.

Their majesties and highnesses expressed their satisfaction with the reassuring medical reports of the heath of Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, as well as their sincere wishes that God will keep him in good health and protect him from every harm.

The Supreme Council seizes the glorious 25th National Day anniversary celebrations of the Sultanate of Oman to extend its heartfelt congratulation to His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, sultan of Oman, and the fraternal Omani people, hailing the great economic, civilizational, and cultural achievements of the sultanate during his majesty's era and beeseeching Almighty God to preserve the Sultanate of Oman and its leader for further security, stability, and sacrifices.

The Supreme Council also extends its congratulations and wishes to His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates, and its people on the glorious 24th National Day, wishing the United Arab Emirates every progress and prosperity.

The Supreme Council also extends its congratulations to His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the State of Bahrain, on the glorious National Day of the State of Bahrain, beseeching Almighty God to maintain good and prosperity for the State of Bahrain and its people.

The Supreme Council then listened to a report by His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the State of Bahrain and chairman of the 15th session of the Supreme Council, on defining a comprehensive vision of the overall position of the GCC in light of recent developments and events and the requirements of joint GCC action, including mechanisms and trends, in order to confront challenges, implement resolutions, strengthen the GCC march, and meet the aspirations and ambitions of its peoples.

The Supreme Council also praised the ideas and positive visions of the report aimed at activating coordination and cooperation among the GGC member states in political, economic, and security areas in order to achieve and support security, stability, and prosperity in the GCC member states and in the region as well.

The Supreme Council discussed all aspects of and developments in the joint action, and their majesties and highness also discussed relations among their states and reviewed the brotherly efforts to resolve the pending bilateral matters among their states.

They expressed satisfaction with the scope of understanding at these consultations. Moreover, they decided to redouble their efforts to help find the appropriate solutions.

The Supreme Council was apprised of the reports submitted and recommendations made by the Ministerial Council and the ministerial committees. It also discussed the ways to promote the march of cooperation and coordination among GCC members in a manner that would reflect the depth of fraternal ties as well as the strong convictions regarding common destiny and common goals. The Council renewed its willingness to take steps to achieve the goals set forth in the GCC statutes in a manner that will realize the aspirations of GCC leaders and citizens with regard to consolidating security and stability and maintaining the process of development and prosperity seeking inspiration from the august speech delivered by His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id at the inaugural session of this summit, given the wise perspective regarding the importance of comprehensive development for the region at present and in the future enshrined in this speech.

Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions related to its aggression

The Supreme Council discussed the progress of Iraq's implementation of the Security Council resolutions related to its aggression against the State of Kuwait. It expressed its grave concern over the failure of the Iraqi Government to fully comply with basic parts of its international obligations per the said resolutions, and also over its suspicious conduct with regard to the elimination of mass destruction weapons, which constitutes a breach of the cease-fire terms enshrined in Resolution 687 and the other relevant international legitimacy resolutions.

The Council noted with deep regret that the procrastination pursued by the Iraqi Government toward the implementation of the Security Council resolutions over the past years has resulted in the destruction of Iraq's human, economic, and social structures; neutralized its capabilities and regional role; and rendered the Iraqi people's sufferings a bargaining chip to get the sanctions clamped on this regime lifted without complying with the Security Council resolutions, some of which gave due attention to the Iraqi people's living and health conditions, but which were turned down by the Iraqi regime under the flimsiest of pretexts, thus denying the Iraqi people the chance to obtain their necessary supplies using their natural resources.

Consequently, the Supreme Council holds the Iraqi Government fully responsible for the serious deterioration in the living and health conditions of Iraqi citizens. It expresses the sympathy of the GCC members with the fraternal Iraqi people in their current plight. The Supreme Council asks the Iraqi Government to implement Security Council Resolutions 706,712, and 986, which constitute the appropriate available mechanisms for easing the sufferings of the fraternal Iraqi people.

Within this context, the Supreme Council studied the facts revealed by the events in Iraq, and what the UN Special Commission charged with dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction revealed, since last August in terms of the worrying information on the serious dimensions of the Iraqi armament programs in the nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological fields and the missile field and the Iraqi Government's confession of these facts after four years of evasion and attempts to distort and conceal facts.

The Council expresses its deep regret over the fact that the Iraqi Government has continued to produce bacteriological weapons that are capable of spreading epidemics which could inflict grave harm on Iraq itself and the entire region, not to mention its production of chemical and radioactive weapons that are not less harmful and devastating. The Council underlines the importance of intensifying the efforts of the UN Commission assigned the task of eliminating Iraqi weapons of mass destruction by promoting the work of its monitoring organs so that all these weapons and their components may be brought under control and eliminated rapidly. In this regard, the Council expressed the GCC members' readiness to continue to contribute toward the work of this commission by way of extending financial and political support to it. The Council further urges all world states to support these efforts in financial and political terms to ensure the continuity of the Commission and to help it fulfill its tasks. This should be done out of the world community's responsibility to implement the UN Security Council resolutions and its concern to eliminate all types of weapons of mass destruction, to arrive at a Middle East entirely free of all these weapons.

The Supreme Council stresses the need for the Iraqi Government's absolute cooperation with the said Commission and to implement in full its obligations in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Until that goal is achieved, the Supreme Council demands the world community to maintain pressure on the Iraqi Government until Iraq proves its good intentions and completes the implementation of the provisions of Resolution 687 and the other relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly those related to the release of Kuwaiti and other prisoners. These prisoners have endured suffering for a long time in a flagrant violation of Resolution 687 and the Geneva Third and Fourth Conventions. The Council also stresses the need for Iraq to refrain from any hostile or provocative action in compliance with Resolution 949, and to abide by the mechanism of reparations and to return all property.

The Supreme Council reaffirms its total rejection of any policies that aim at encroaching on Iraq's territorial integrity or at dividing it, and expresses its absolute concern for Iraq's unity and sovereignty.

Relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the islands issue

The Supreme Council studied relations between the GCC member states and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as Iran's occupation of the three Emirian islands of Tunb al-Kubra, Tunb al-Sughra, and Abu Musa. It also deeply regretted Iran's refusal to respond to the repeated serious and sincere Emirian calls for reaching a peaceful solution to this issue.

The Supreme Council expressed its concern over continued measures by the Iranian Government to entrench its occupation of the three islands in violation of Emirian sovereignty, the principles of international law, the Organization of Islamic Conference Charter, good neighborliness principles, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the region's states.

The GCC Supreme Council reiterates its firm support for the UAE and for entrenching its sovereignty over its islands, Tunb al-Kubra, Tunb al-Sughra, and Abu Musa, as well as its full and absolute support for all the measures and peaceful methods adopted by the UAE to restore its sovereignty over the three islands. The Supreme Council calls on Iran to agree to refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

The Middle East peace process

Based on their positive stand on and their support for the Middle East peace process, the GCC member states reaffirm the need for peace to be comprehensive, just, and lasting as a basis for security, stability, and prosperity in the region and for the exchange of interests among its states to eradicate the factors of violence and extremism and to entrench the values of tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and cultural cooperation among the peoples.

In order to achieve this goal and to stress the firm positions of the GCC member states on this issue, it is necessary to meet the just and legitimate demands of all parties in accordance with Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace, including a full Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and holy Jerusalem, and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate national right to establish their independent state on their national soil. It also calls for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the borderline that existed on 4 June 1967, as well as from southern Lebanon, and for returning all the occupied territories to Lebanon's sovereignty in accordance with Security Council Resolution 425.

The GCC member states reiterate their welcome of the peace agreement between Jordan and Israel and also welcome the signing of the second phase agreement on expanding the scope of the Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as another step toward bringing about just and comprehensive peace.

While the GCC member states praise the constructive and effective efforts of the two sponsors of the peace conference, particularly the personal efforts of U.S. President Bill Clinton, it stresses its readiness to support every positive effort to speed up the achievement of a final settlement among the parties to the Middle East peace process in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the term of reference of the Madrid Conference.

The Supreme Council was also acquainted with an assessment of the Middle East and North Africa Economic Summit which was held in Amman recently. The council hoped that these conferences will contribute to supporting and entrenching the Middle East peace process.

The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina

The Supreme Council reviewed the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and welcomed the Dayton peace agreement reached by the parties concerned on 21 November. The council expressed satisfaction with the articles stipulated in the agreement which emphasize the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. While the council hails the efforts made by the United States and the European Union states to reach that agreement, it calls on the international community to extend every possible support to help the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina in their development, economic, and social plans.

The phenomenon of extremism, violence, and terrorism.

The Supreme Council discussed the phenomenon of extremism, violence, and terrorism and noted with deep concern the mounting extremist tendencies and the acts of violence and terrorism that constitute an international concern. The council condemns all forms of terrorism that aim at spreading chaos, fear, and tension, and at killing of innocent people. It expresses its strong rejection of this phenomenon which unequivocally conflicts with the principles of the right Islamic religion and which has nothing to do with Islam. The council stresses that its states support of, and express solidarity with Bahrain, and their full support for the measures it takes to ensure security and stability based on the principle of joint destiny of the GCC states and the comprehensive nature of their security.

The Supreme Council also strongly condemns the sinful and criminal action that took place in Riyadh which killed innocent people, injured others, and terrorized safe people. While the council denounces these criminal and treacherous acts that aim to undermine the great achievements, progress, and development realized by Saudi Arabia — which became a prominent landmark that was lauded by all — it is fully confident of the strength of the cohesion of this safe Islamic society and the ability of its security men to confront these criminals who will not escape justice. It stresses that all acts of chaos and sabotage, whatever their sources or location might be, will not undermine the security and stability of the GCC states.

The Supreme Council emphasizes the need to intensify contacts between the member states, and stresses its desire and determination to confront these terrorist and their destructive practices through coordination and cooperation between various security, media, and educational organs to protect the Gulf society from these extraneous phenomena and to work out joint plans and strategies to confront them and abort their conspiracies.

The Supreme Council also condemns the tendentious media campaigns and those who direct them against some of its states with the aim of encouraging confusion and terrorist and sabotage acts and undermining the security and stability of the GCC states. It expresses its support for all measures and steps taken within the Arab and international frameworks to confront and uproot terrorism.

The Supreme Council discussed the issue of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in general, including the Gulf region, in light of the serious and terrifying information obtained on the Iraqi arms program, as well as information on other programs for possessing and developing weapons of mass destruction in the Gulf region. The Council expressed deep concern over the fact that these programs pose a threat to the security and peace in the Gulf and the Middle East as a whole.

The Supreme Council calls for making the Middle East in general, and the gulf region in particular, a zone free of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction—nuclear, chemical, and biological—and eliminating the means of transporting them. The council asserts that dismantling Iraqi mass destruction weapons is a step in the direction of freeing the entire region from these destructive weapons, in compliance with the letter and spirit of Security Council Resolution 687. This would also be in line with the Supreme Council's statement issued on 31 January 1992.

The Summit also calls for taking appropriate measures to stop the spread of technology affiliated with research on weapons of mass destruction and their production in the Gulf, and reinforce and further activate the system of guarantees by the International Atomic Energy Agency in light of the lessons learned from the process of dismantling Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and the mechanisms of continuous monitoring in the future in accordance with Security Council Resolution 715.

Scopes of cooperation and Coordination

In the military field, the Supreme Council was briefed on the results of the meeting by their highnesses and their excellencies' the GCC defense ministers which was held in Bahrain in November 1995, and approved its recommendations aiming at implementing programs to upgrade the collective defensive capability of the GCC states and to proceed forward with developing the Desert Shield force.

In the security field...[pauses] I will repeat what I just read: aiming at implementing programs to upgrade the collective defensive capability of the GCC states, and to proceed forward with developing an effective deterring force.

In the security field, the Supreme Council looked into the new scopes of security cooperation and was briefed on the recommendations by the third extraordinary meeting of the interior ministers which was held in Bahrain in April 1995, as well as those of the 14th meeting of the interior ministers held in Bahrain in November 1995, and expressed satisfaction with the results of the two meetings. In this context, the Supreme Council stressed the need to reinforce and intensify cooperation and coordination efforts among the member states in the field of security due to its significance in guaranteeing safety and stability to pursue the drive of development and economic prosperity which the GCC states enjoy. The Council also emphasized the necessity to activate the security agreements between the GCC states after they have been ratified.

The Council was also briefed on the results of the decision reached by the interior ministers on the movement of citizens using their ordinary identity cards. Due to the importance of this matter in fostering links and interconnection among the peoples of the GCC states, the Supreme Council approved the bilateral agreements reached by member states that citizens may use their personal identity cards. The Council hoped that more bilateral arrangements may be concluded and that the GCC states will be able to finalize their procedures and issue personal identity cards for their citizens as a prelude to implementing this constructive step in other GCC states.

In the economic field:

The GCC Supreme Council approved recommendations pertaining to electric power linkage among the GCC states reached by the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee and ordered that the implementation of this linkage begin. The Supreme Council decided to unify the necessary procedures to implement the GCC's economic decisions in member states.

In affirmation of the principle of economic citizenship [al-muwatanah al-iqtisadiyah], the Council decided to allow the GCC states' citizens to carry out economic activities in a number of educational fields in accordance with the GCC states' valid regulations. The Supreme Council has taken cognizance of the steps to implement its resolutions adopted in its 15th session on developing economic cooperation within the framework of implementing the unified economic agreement and approved the recommendations of the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee on promoting the banking work in the GCC states and increasing its power of competition on the regional and international levels. These recommendations included allowing national banks in principle to open branches in the GCC states and to link the automatic teller machines networks in the GCC states.

The Supreme Council approved the policies, plans, principles, and measures reached by the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee and the ministers of labor and social affairs to facilitate the employment and transfer of labor forces and to absorb the growing surplus of this force.

Concerning the unification of the customs tariff, the Supreme Council asked the Ministerial Council and the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee to hold a joint meeting during the first half of 1996 to agree on a project to unify the GCC states customs tariff within a comprehensive review of the available flexibility of the unified economic agreement, allowing for realizing the required unanimity.

The Supreme Council decided to continue work, in accordance with the current regulations, for the GCC states citizens to practice retail trade and to maintain the current regulations related to allowing the GCC states' establishments and production units to open trade representation offices in member states.

The Supreme Council evaluated the economic conditions in the GCC states and expressed satisfaction with the noticeable improvement in the GCC states economies. It praised the tangible role played by the private sector in the various economic activities. The Supreme Council noted with satisfaction the recent agreement which was reached within OPEC on extending the current production ceiling and hoped that the OPEC member states will not exceed their quotas and urged producers outside OPEC to cooperate with OPEC producers to strengthen the oil prices and to improve conditions and stability in the oil market.

The Council was informed of the current negotiations with states and international trade groups and asked the Ministerial Council to promote these negotiations to serve the GCC states' basic economic interests.

In the information field:

The Supreme Council was informed of the results of the seventh information ministers conference which was held in the State of Bahrain in October 1995 and approved the recommendations on activating joint work among the information bodies in the GCC states.

In the legal field:

The Supreme Council approved the agreement on implementing judicial regulations, announcements, and authorizations with the aim of strengthening judicial cooperation among the competent bodies in the member states.

The Supreme Council decided to appoint Mr. Jamil Ibrahim Hujaylan, from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, secretary general of the GCC in succession to Shaykh Fahim Bin-Sultan al-Qasimi whose tenure of office has ended.

While wishing the new secretary general success in the performance of his duties on the path of the GCC's comprehensive progress, the Supreme Council voices its high appreciation of the great efforts which were exerted by His Excellency Shaykh Fahim Bin-Sultan al-Qasimi during his assumption of the office of the secretary general—efforts which had a great effect in deepening bonds of cooperation among the GCC states in various domains.

The Supreme Council expressed its thanks and appreciation for Dr. 'Abdallah Ibrahim al-Quwayz, the assistant secretary general for economic affairs, for his valuable efforts and effective contribution to the GCC's economic march during his work at the GCC's general secretariat.

The Supreme Council voices its great appreciation and gratitude for His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman and for the Omani government and people for the warm reception, cordiality, hospitality, and sincere feelings of friendship shown to the GCC leaders, praising the excellent arrangements and the great and important role of his majesty through his chairmanship of the current session of the Supreme Council and his excellent management of the meetings, something which had a great effect in reaching the important and useful results of this session.

Qatari Foreign Minister Explains Walkout

JN0612174395 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Report by George Nawfal in Muscat]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Qatar's walkout from the final session of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] summit was a great surprise. It was the first such move since the establishment of the GCC in 1981.

The disagreement was over the post of the GCC secretary general. The new secretary general is Saudi Arabia's nominee, Jamil Hujaylan, who won the approval of five out of the six GCC states. Qatar insisted on its nominee, 'Abd-al-Rahman al-'Atiyah to the end, creating a crisis and the subsequent Qatari walkout. Qatar regarded Hujaylan's choice as illegal because the GCC decisions are adopted unanimously and not by a majority, as the Qatari foreign minister says:

[Begin Qatari Foreign Minister Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani recording] The walkout took place because the resolutions were illegal. Of course, we have our reservations because this is illegal and there is no unanimity. [end recording]

In any case, while declaring the summit closed, Sultan Qabus did not announce the next venue of the summit, which is supposed to take place in Qatar. [passage omitted]

Omani Minister on Qatari Walkout, Iraq

JN0712075995 Muscat Sultanate of Oman Television Network in Arabic 1930 GMT 6 Dec 95

[News conference by Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, Omani minister of state for foreign affairs, with foreign and domestic correspondents in Muscat on 6 December—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Bin-'Alawi] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Praise be to God and peace and blessings on Prophet Muhammad and his family.

This is an opportunity, and it has become a tradition after every Gulf summit, to meet with you to explain what can be explained in the final statement. I am sure by now you are acquainted with the text of the final statement that was declared at the end of the 16th summit of Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC]. We in the Sultanate of Oman were very pleased to host this summit, and we were also pleased with the good results reached, God willing, toward realization of the aspired joint objectives. We were also pleased because this 16th summit will show, during the new GCC march, new trends in joint cooperation among GCC member states. I hope the contents of the statement are enough to answer many of your questions. I want to say that I will not answer any questions regarding the consultations that took place between the leaders last night because they were held within the framework of joint action and strategic trends that cannot be revealed. However, within the general framework, I will be prepared to explain the general political trends among the GCC states. I am sure you noted that His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin- Khalifah Al Thani, amir of the State of Qatar, was not present at the final session. Before you ask me about this, I want to explain the background that led to this action. Very simply, it was an expected issue that surfaced at the last moment, although it was unprecedented in the council. We consider it something unexpected concerning the Supreme Council's appointment of Shaykh Jamil Ibrahim al-Hujaylan to replace the GCC Secretary General Shaykh Fahim al- Qasimi. The brothers in the State of Qatar have their own views on this subject. The Supreme Council, however, followed the procedures adopted by the council during the 14th summit in the United Arab Emirates when Shaykh Fahim al-Qasimi was chosen, and during which it was agreed to rotate the post of secretary general according to alphabetical order. It is now the turn of Saudi Arabia.

Six months ago, the State of Qatar filed a request through the GCC General Secretariat to hold the post of secretary general. However, the GCC's bylaws state that appointing the GCC secretary general is done by the leaders. The member states of the General Secretariat did not take any action toward Qatar's request. The issue was left for the leaders to consider. Meanwhile, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which, in alphabetical order, has the right to hold this position, sent a request to the member states in this regard. Also, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia sent letters to his brother leaders. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia secured the approval of the GCC's other five states to nominate Shaykh Jamil Ibrahim al-Hujaylan to the post of secretary general, which took place this evening.

The brothers in the State of Qatar have a different view. They think that a mechanism other than the alphabetical order should be devised. They also think that countries that have not yet held positions in the General Secretariat must be given priority. Thus, they did not attend the closing session to express their disapproval of the decision made by the five states. This development took place in the last moment while preparing for the final session. This was an unexpected development. I chose to brief you on it before you start asking me questions.

[Ghurab] I am Wahib Ghurab from the AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT newspaper. Mr. Minister: Was there no way of reaching a compromise on this issue? You said that this issue began six months ago, was it not possible to avoid embarrassment at the last minute?

[Bin-'Alawi] I think that everybody did their best not to allow such a thing. However, the Qatari brothers chose to take this position in line with their view. They have a right to do this. We could not accommodate their view, which conflicts with that of five other states. Thus, they have the right to express their feelings in the way they deem fit. They did that by not attending the final session.

[Al-Sabi] Mahmud al-Sabi from OMAN newspaper. You have said that the Qatari team's walkout of the final session was unexpected and took place at the last moment. Still, this remains a serious precedent. Does this pose any threat to the GCC future? Another question, the Qatari foreign minister said in Muscat that Qatar's withdrawal from the GCC is still possible. He justified this by saying that the second article of the GCC Charter was violated.

[Bin-'Alawi] I do not want to comment on the statement by the Qatari foreign minister before his departure. I read his statement. They think that this is a violation. However, the other five states think that appointing a secretary general is a procedural matter, and not a substantive issue that requires a unanimous vote. As you see, the issue relates to the procedure of appointing a secretary general. Should this be done by election, in alphabetical order, or in other ways? It is only a question of procedure. They chose to express their view by doing this. This was an unexpected development that took place at the last moment. I do not think that Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah is considering taking other steps in this direction, as some press reports said. This development took place at the last moment and we could not resolve it. This is what happened. Honestly, there is nothing else to it. The five states accepted the nomination of Shaykh Jamil Ibrahim al-Hujaylan to the post of secretary general of the GCC. There is nothing else to it. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified correspondent] I have two questions. The first is about the vacant assistant secretary general post, as was announced in the final statement. Was this announcement meant to persuade Qatar to accept this post? The second question is: Is there an explanation for the stringency that was adopted in the final statement toward Iran and Iraq, despite both countries' attempts recently to demonstrate good intentions?

[Bin-'Alawi] The post of the assistant secretary general for economic affairs became vacant. But, selecting and appointing a person for this post is the task of the Ministerial Council and not the summit. This post will be viewed in terms of hierarchy and according to the GCC norms.

As for the second question, there is no stringency on the part of the GCC toward Iran or Iraq. What was said reflects the reality. Regarding Iran, the dispute with the United Arab Emirates on the islands is clear and well known. This is not the first time this issue has been mentioned. What was said in the statement is a continuation of what was said in previous statements, nothing more or less. We do not think that anybody would expect the GCC to change its position as long as the two countries have not reached a settlement to the dispute. We hope the two countries would reach an understanding in the near future on the means of resolving this problem.

Regarding Iraq, the issue is once again clear. There is no new stringency. What was said reflects the realities on the ground. Iraq is under the UN-imposed sanctions. I do not think it is necessary for me to mention the reasons and what happened. You are journalists and know the reasons why the embargo was imposed, and how the United Nations views the issue. This is not a secret. I do not think there is any stringency.

[Hijazi] Your Excellency, I am 'Abdallah Hijazi from the Jordanian newspaper AL-RA'Y. Please allow me to ask about the political dimension of the GCC summit's deliberations. I would like to highlight the final statement's emphasis on the pan-Arab interest. I would like to ask about two things: The inter-Gulf relations and inter-Arab relations. Was the rush toward establishing relations between the Gulf states and Israel discussed, and what is the general tendency on this issue? The second question is: Did the summit address Arab solidarity — I mean promoting inter-Arab relations to overcome the repercussions of the Gulf war?

[Bin-'Alawi] Thank you. First of all, there is nothing called establishing relations with Israel. What is proposed, and what we talked about and has become well known, is supporting the Middle East peace process. This is what was proposed. The positions of the Gulf states are part of a world endeavor, which you all know. There are no differences whatsoever on the achievement of a comprehensive, just, and permanent peace in the Middle East. All the Arab countries have become committed to this orientation and course.

As for the issue of inter-Arab relations or Arab solidarity, I do not think there is any problem or crisis about Arab solidarity. There is an Arab solidarity and inter-Arab relations exist. There are good relations among Arab leaders. I do not think that there is a crisis, except for the case with the brothers in Iraq. If you talk about Iraq, I will say yes, there is an unresolved crisis between the Gulf states and Iraq. The reasons are known so I do not want to delve into details. By and large, inter-Arab relations are good. The Arab League is performing its role and the Arab foreign ministers are carrying out their role. I think we are in an excellent stage and are on the right track regarding the future of joint Arab action. Thank you.

[Al-Tawqi] Humud Bin-'Ali al-Tawqi from AL-WATAN newspaper. Your Excellency, terms like political terrorism, political violence, and extremists started to emerge at this stage. Would your excellency shed light on these concepts, which started to worry even states and leaders. Are there any specific reasons for political terrorism? The second question is on Iraq: Observers who were following the summit's activities expected the final statement would be flexible regarding the Iraqis, especially since we learned Iraqi President Saddam Husayn sent letters to the leaders on this issue. He demanded an Iraqi-Gulf reconciliation. Would you please tell us more about the content of this message?

[Bin-'Alawi] I will not address the first question because the final statement addressed it, and talked in detail about terrorism. As for the other question on the brothers in Iraq, I say yes, the brothers in Iraq ask us to work while they do not. We talk about this issue with all sincerity. We say to them: You want us to take positions while you do not. For example, they rejected the Security Council Resolution 986 on a partial lifting of the suffering for reasons about which they have their own viewpoints. However, we do not believe that their viewpoint should have precedence over the Iraqi people's need for food and medicine. If the Iraqi brothers offered anything or cooperated with the commission entrusted with dismantling Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, and if the commission expressed satisfaction and said there was nothing left in this regard, then the Gulf states would be among, if not the first, of those countries to cooperate and see if there is an opportunity for putting things in a new form. The Gulf states should not be asked to do something while Iraq does nothing. Iraq should work and take the initiative and then the Gulf states should respond to this initiative. Thank you. [passage omitted]

[Unidentified correspondent for Paris Radio Monte Carlo] Rolf Ekeus, head of the [UN Special] Commission entrusted with removing Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, visited the region recently and asked for assistance. He threatened to stop the work of the commission if aid was not extended. The final statement of the summit pledged full political and material support for the UN Special Commission. Does this mean that the political support of the GCC states will be the same as in the past? As for the financial support, was a certain amount specified, and how will each GCC country's share be specified?

[Bin-'Alawi] The Gulf states believe that the UN Special Commission should be in a position that would enable it to perform its mission in the best way. The support pledged in the statement is a moral commitment on the part of the Gulf states just as any commitment by any UN member state. The commission was formed upon a Security Council resolution, which is the highest UN authority. We should make such a pledge because this serves our interest. Yes, we will extend all possible assistance to Ambassador Rolf Ekeus' commission so that it and the United Nations will be able to carry out their mission in the optimal way. We have a vested interest in this. Still, other countries as well as Iraq have an interest in the commission's completion of its task as soon as possible so that Iraq will emerge from its ordeal. There should be an agreement with other world parties to support Ekeus' commission. There are many proposals and opinions. There are also estimated amounts which I cannot talk about now. For our part, we will fulfill this duty.

[Farajallah] Mr. Minister. Hamdi Farajallah from the BBC's Arabic section. Allow me to return to the question of Iraq, since I believe it is important at this summit in particular. There have been repeated calls, especially the one by Shaykh Zayid, president of the United Arab Emirates. If my memory serves me right, Shaykh Zayid said that any Arab who condones the suffering of the Iraqi people does not belong to Arabism. In addition, the Iraqi authorities think that separating the Iraqi people and the Iraqi regime is absolutely useless and not in the Gulf interest. The Iraqi authorities say that isolating Iraq in this way disrupts the balance of power in the region. Some people argue that such a stand toward Iraq is the result of U.S.-British pressure from abroad and Saudi-Kuwait pressure on the domestic front. There is no doubt that any positive signal from the summit will have an echo in the international community which you have referred to. One can feel that there is a hard-line approach toward Iraq, rather than rapprochement. Qatar is one of the countries that took a positive attitude in this context, in addition to the sultan of Oman and the amir of Bahrain.

[Bin-'Alawi] Let me speak briefly about this issue. First of all, everyone is entitled to his own views. The brothers in Iraq are entitled to their own views. Others also are entitled to their own views. At the outset, I said that those who should take some initiatives in the right direction are certainly the brother officials in Iraq. The brothers in Iraq know full well our views in this respect. They should take the first step, which should be clear. They should first accept Resolution 986, which gives them some funds to lift part of the suffering. We talk to the brothers in Iraq very frankly about this. There is no ambiguity here. The statement you cited by Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan is right. He is right. However, we think that the key to the lifting of the suffering is in the hand of the Iraqi Government, and not in our hand. We appeal to the brothers in Iraq to accept Resolution 986 which allows Iraq to sell part of its oil to meet some needs. We do not say that this resolution will lift the embargo, but it is part of the embargo. Let me reassure you that we have held intensive discussions with the Iraqi brothers in this regard. However, they hold a different view. We should not be blamed for what others fail to do. Thank you. [passage omitted]

['Abd-al-Ghani] Husayn 'Abd-al-Ghani from the AL-HAYAH newspaper. Mr. Minister: Qatari sources cited another reason for their anger and walkout from the final session. They said that a paragraph in the final statement welcomed the Qatari amir, who was attending the summit for the first time as his country's amir. The question is why this paragraph was removed from the final statement although the Qataris most probably deemed it necessary to promote the regional legitimacy of the new rule in Qatar, particularly since the former amir sent a letter to the summiteers saying that he is still the legitimate ruler of Qatar. The second question is: When I asked the Qatari foreign minister prior to his walkout if the walkout was from the final session or from the GCC per se, he was noncommittal. Has the GCC remained gripped by the last-minute surprise, as you have just noted, or will it move to avert a rift in the GCC ranks, which could bring about its disintegration?

[Bin-'Alawi] First, I have said that this development was unexpected, and took place at the last minute. I do not think that it will cause a rift, as some journalists believe. I will not comment on the statements made by brother Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim. Nevertheless, when we meet, we will discuss this issue.

['Abd-al-Ghani] [Words indistinct] paragraph [words indistinct].

[Bin-'Alawi] When I meet with Shaykh Hamad who made a statement to this effect, I will talk to him about this issue.

[Unidentified correspondent] [Words indistinct]

['Abd-al-Ghani] Qatari sources, as we have said.

[Radi] Mansur Radi, from the Bahraini magazine AL-MAWAQIF. My question is: The Muscat summit has been concluded without setting a venue or a date for the next summit. Does this mean that the Muscat summit is the final GCC summit just as the Arab summit held in Cairo in 1990 was the last Arab summit.

[Bin-'Alawi] What are your personal wishes in this regard? [laughter] What are your personal wishes in this regard? Just tell me.

[Ahmad] I am Mustafa Ahmad from the Omani newspaper AL-WATAN and the Jordanian newspaper AL-DUSTUR: Mr. Minister, the U.S. Congress has recently passed a bill authorizing the transfer of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. What is the GCC members' stand toward this decision. Second, from time to time, Israel declares that Jerusalem is its eternal capital. What is the Gulf stand on this issue? Thank you.

[Bin-'Alawi] I will be brief in my comments on this. Our declarations have stated that Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Palestine. [applause] With regard to the U.S. stand, what concerns us is the official position of the U.S. Administration, which is opposed to the Congress' inclinations in this regard. With regard to the issue of Jerusalem, the Israelis and Palestinians have agreed to defer discussions until the finals status talks. Meanwhile, the Israelis claim that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, whereas we say that it is the capital of the State of Palestine.

[Damanhuri] I am Damanhuri, chief editor of the Saudi newspaper AL-NADWAH. Mr. Minister: You began the news conference by saying that King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, addressed five messages to five GCC members on the nomination of Shaykh Jamil al-Hujaylan to the post of GCC secretary general. Nobody opposed the nomination. This means that Qatar was one of the countries that did not object to the nomination. This is deemed a principled moral and legal commitment. Second, let us suppose that the nomination of the GCC secretary general is a substantive issue. In view of Qatar's walkout from the final session, the delegations attending this session unanimously supported the nomination. This means that the rule of unanimity was not broken. Is this correct? Thank you.

[Bin-'Alawi] The State of Qatar expressed its views when it received the Saudi message. The two countries exchanged letters on the issue. Each country explained its own views. The two countries failed to reach agreement. As for the other four countries, their leaders expressed their full support for the Saudi position. This is what I want to make clear. Nonetheless, the GCC statute stipulates that substantive issues will be resolved by unanimity, whereas procedural issues will be settled by a majority vote. The five countries believe that the appointment of the GCC secretary general and any thing of the sort, for that matter, is a procedural issue that does not require unanimity, whereas our Qatari brothers believe that the choice of a GCC secretary general is a substantive issue that requires a unanimous vote. In all honesty and clarity, this is the heart of the matter. At any rate, what has been done cannot be undone. As I have said, it was a unexpected incident that took place at the last minute. We held direct contacts with our Qatari brothers, particularly with His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah and Foreign Minister His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim even minutes before the start of the final session. This was a last-minute incident we could not avert. God willing, this incident will not produce any negative repercussions. [passage omitted]

[Bin-Mubarak] Suhayl Bin-Mubarak from the OMANI NEWS AGENCY. Mr. Minister: With regard to military issues, have the summiteers decided to increase the strength of the Desert Shield Force? In the past, there was the idea of launching a joint army. Nevertheless, this army has failed to see the light of day. At this summit, has a decision been made to increase the strength of this force in order to promote its effectiveness? Similarly, there was an idea to launch a joint radar system. Has a decision been made on this issue? Thank you.

[Bin-'Alawi] Thank you. What I can say in this regard is that the GCC members are pursuing a strategic option. This will ensure the promotion of the joint defense capability. I do not wish to add to this. [passage omitted]

[Siyam] 'Ali Siyam from Bahrain. Mr. Minister: The return to Iraq is dictated by pan-Arab duty. I also believe that several Gulf leaders were sympathetic toward a return by Iraq to the Arab fold. We are constantly opposed to such a return by Iraq before it complies with all the relevant international resolutions. I would like to ask you how you evaluate international resolutions and the mechanism of their passage at the UN Security Council. There is a general impression shared by the Arabs and probably other world peoples that these resolutions are forced by U.S. pressures. This means that it is the United States which forces these resolutions. This being the case, the compliance by Iraq with international resolutions will never be achieved as long as Rolf Ekeus continues to vacillate. In his reports, he sometimes says that there is Iraqi compliance; at other times, he speaks of noncompliance. There is a sort of confusion on the Arab street over the issue of international resolutions. How does your excellency evaluate this matter? Thank you.

[Bin-'Alawi] Dear brother from Bahrain: You have answered your question. You have said that it is the United States that is forcing these resolutions. Well, we agree with you on this. [Words indistinct] [laughter] The important thing is to comply with the resolutions.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Minister: Now that the Sultanate of Oman is the current GCC chairman in the aftermath of the 16th summit, what can Oman do to cope with the GCC's current crisis? Is it possible to contemplate the formulation of explanatory annexes to the GCC statute so that there will be no disputes or misunderstandings? For how long can there be no word on the venue of the next summit? Is it possible for Kuwait to host the next summit, given that Kuwait comes after Qatar in its turn to host the GCC summit?

[Bin-'Alawi] First, with regard to the summit, I have just said that the State of Qatar can host the next summit. We use alphabetical order to determine which country can host the summit each year. With regard to the formulation of explanatory annexes to the GCC statute, I would like to say that there is ample room for improvement. Such a development is most welcome. We will not oppose such a move. We are six GCC members, each of which has sovereignty rights. There is no law or statute that is binding on all members. We are six independent and sovereign states. We are equal in every respect. Consequently, each GCC member has the right to take whatever measures it feels fall in line with its perspective and interests. This is the gist of the matter. I do not believe that this transient development [sentence incomplete as heard]. I have told you that our Qatari brothers, just like us, are extremely eager to safeguard the GCC march. Qatar is an effective and important GCC member, and a party to its march. In any crisis the GCC has faced, this was felt. I would like to recall that during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Qatari troops joined the Gulf troops in the battle. They engaged in fighting in al-Khafji. We cannot underestimate Qatar's significance, efforts, usefulness, and important contributions. Personally speaking, I do not think that His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah, amir of Qatar, whom I know well, is contemplating any of the moves that are in your mind. This is a transient development that, we think, will be resolved where it surfaced.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister: The summit completely ignored the border file, despite the fact that it contains many thorny issues. You had a successful experience with Saudi Arabia. Why not intensify efforts to work out border disputes? Another question, the Damascus Declaration foreign ministers will hold a meeting shortly. What about this Declaration? Is it dead, or is it only a question of formal meetings without any action?

[Bin-'Alawi] I think the final statement says something about this. The border issues were referred to as bilateral issues. The statement said that consultations were good. Border issues in the Arab world and elsewhere are sensitive. Therefore, they must be addressed carefully. We are continuing our efforts. The leaders and the people want to find solutions to these problems. We do not think that these issues could produce very negative reactions, as some reports say. This question needs patience.

[Rashwan] 'Asim Rashwan from AL-KHALIJ newspaper. Mr. Minister. Listening to Sultan Qabus's speech at the opening session, I noticed that there is a tendency toward adopting a moderate policy, since this, as his majesty said, promotes security, stability, and prosperity. I was not the only person to get this impression, because it was expected that this would be reflected in the final statement, particularly with regard to Iraq. However, we were surprised by a hard-line position toward Iraq that is even tougher than previous Gulf statements. This position is strange. It created doubts about the independent Gulf decisionmaking, since a majority of Gulf leaders are inclined toward adopting a moderate policy to safeguard the region's true security, which can never be achieved without cooperation among the regional states, including Iran and Iraq. If we are talking about international resolutions, 'Ali Sayyar rightly pointed out that we now have double standards which are not honest and which reflect one view. We regret that the final statement reflected the U.S. view and that the U.S. voice in this statement was louder than the Gulf voice, whether the U.S. voice came from abroad or was an echo of it on the domestic front. I want you to comment on this. In addition, I want to say that the final statement contained nothing new if we compare it with previous statements. Does the GCC, as a regional organization, follow the policy of the Arab League?

[Bin-'Alawi] First of all, I want to make one thing clear. Since the 1970's when Britain left this region, the Gulf states have pursued a moderate policy. The only moderate policy in the region is that of the Gulf states. I think that you all agree with me that the Gulf states pursue a policy marked by moderation, cooperation, peace, rapprochement, solidarity, and all the other good principles which God asked man to follow. When we call for moderation, we call on others who follow a hard-line, violent, and confrontational approach that harms others. The Gulf states did not aggress on anyone. The Gulf states were aggressed upon. So who is the extremist and who is the moderate? Despite this, we urge the extremists to be moderate so we can coexist with our brothers, friends, and neighbors. We do not seek to antagonize anyone. We do not want to live in a hostile environment. We want everyone to be brothers and to love each other. This is the policy of the Gulf states. I do not think that brother 'Asim Rashwan from AL-KHALIJ newspaper disagrees with me. As for Iraq, the Gulf nations did not attack Iraq. This is clear. Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait. So who is the hard-liner and who is the moderate one? We know that this is over now and Kuwait restored its sovereignty. You know the rest of the story. However, we are not adopting a tough policy. There are international resolutions which Iraq has accepted. If one accepts a resolution only to reject it later, then I believe we won't have a region enjoying peace and stability. We did not impose these resolutions on Iraq. We are not happy for Iraq's situation. On the contrary, we are the closest to Iraq, and we feel the tragedies of the Iraqi people. You might not believe this, but we feel all the suffering of our brothers in Iraq. I do not say this to vaunt or brag. This is the truth. As I have told you, we say this to our brothers in Iraq. What we tell them directly is the same thing we say here now. But for Iraq to ask us to take initiatives while not doing anything, this is impossible because it does not achieve balance. Iraq has a problem with the Gulf states and another with the United Nations. The Gulf states are working to resolve this problem, which is not a small problem. It concerns the existence of nuclear, biological, and chemical programs and weapons. The Gulf states and people would be very happy if nothing of this kind existed and if all UN reports about these weapons were untrue. This would reassure us. We are not happy to hear that Iraq has weapons. If this is untrue, we will be the first to express our happiness. But how can we deny this when we hear about UN efforts, experts, officials, the visits to Baghdad, the cameras and other equipment, the satellites? This is a reality. We should not blame others for our problems. You know that there is the question of missing Kuwaitis, whether you call them prisoners, detainees, or missing in Iraq. Around 600 or 700 people have vanished. We talk about this with our brothers in Iraq. You know that the Sultanate of Oman received the Iraqi foreign minister. It was not easy for us to do this. But we were eager to let our brothers in Iraq hear us directly. We spoke with brother Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf very clearly about this. Those missing Kuwaitis are people created by God. They must be traced. They are either dead or alive. But to deny their existence is something else. If they are dead, there must be remains. If they are alive, then they must be somewhere. If they are somewhere on Iraqi streets and among Iraqi families, then the Iraqi Government must know something about this. We are very clear about such issues. We are not taking a hard-line policy toward Iraq. These are the facts. You should understand things as they are. It is not a question of America, Britain, or Mr. so-and-so. It is not a question of scoring points. We all live in one region. This is our destiny. Before 1990, you are aware of the support extended by the Gulf nations to Iraq in its war with Iran. Can anyone deny this? Iraq is not our enemy. We had hoped that Iraq would be the guarantor of security. Despite all of this, the door is still open. But asking the Gulf nations to lift the embargo without Iraq fulfilling its obligations toward the Gulf states and the international community represented in the United Nations, I think this is unreasonable. [passage omitted]

[Al-Nuti] Yusuf al-Nuti correspondent for Omani Television and the MBC. How do the GCC states view their relations with Iran, especially since Iran considers itself responsible for the security of this region — since it took part in a meeting that brought together the GCC states and Iraq in Muscat in 1976? How do the GCC states view their relations with the EU? Is it a relationship of partnership or one based on interests?

[Bin-'Alawi] First of all, our relations with Iran are based on neighborliness, fraternity, and intertwined interests. We are very keen on promoting these relations and clearing any problems that may impede these interests. Differences of opinion with the Islamic Republic of Iran are natural. However, we seek to resolve these problems. In today's world, there are no two neighborly countries that do not have common problems. I would like to say that any point of contention does mean that we are in a position of confrontation. This is quite irrelevant. I know quite well how the Iranian leaders view things, because I have contacts with them. I know that they have the desire to promote these relations. But, there are some disputed issues. These include the three islands; namely, Tunb al-Kubra, Tunb al-Sughra, and Abu Musa. We all know that Abu Musa Island belongs to Sharjah and Tunb al-Sughra and Tunb al-Kubra to Ra's al-Khaymah emirate. These islands were occupied by the shah following Britain's withdrawal. This is an established fact on which all agree. It is acceptable for everyone to have his own viewpoint or demands. However, this is a fact on the ground. That the GCC states expressed their opinion about this issue does not mean that we are on the brink of break up. We are neighbors and we will continue to be so forever. There were differences in the past, but we managed to coexist with each other.

Our relations with the EU are based on partnership and interests. The EU is our traditional trade partner. We have the desire to expand cooperation. We signed an agreement to set up a free zone. The efforts are ongoing. As you know, there was a meeting with the Europeans in Spain in July. We held another meeting in Riyadh. We also seek to arrange another meeting among officials from both sides in Brussels to discuss political issues. There will be a joint meeting of the foreign ministers of the two groupings in Brussels in April or May. We have common interests. We seek a satisfactory conclusion to our dialogue that would serve the interests of the two groupings. [passage omitted]

'Arab Diplomat' Cited on Saddam's Message to GCC

JN0612095095 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 6 Dec 95 pp 1, 23

[Report by Mustafa Ahmad in Muscat]

[FBIS Translated Text] A prominent Arab diplomat said at an early hour yesterday that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn has sent a rare message to the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] convening in Oman in which he calls for reconciliation among the old enemies of the 1991 Gulf war.

Iraq has been trying to mend the rift in relations with the Arabian Gulf states greatly harmed by its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The Muscat-based diplomat did not disclose the party which conveyed the message to the six countries, which began their annual summit in Muscat on Monday, 4 December. The Arab diplomat added that Saddam urged his neighbors, the GCC states, "to open a new chapter for the interest of all parties, calling for reconciliation."

The Arab diplomat said that this gesture of peace was conveyed to the summit host, Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id. So far, there is no word whether this gesture was discussed in the first working session which was held at a late hour on 4 December.

The Iraqi issue is placed on the summit agenda amid increasing regional calls for easing the suffering of the Iraqi people, who have been under tough sanctions imposed by the United Nations since the Iraqi Forces' invasion of Kuwait. The GCC has been calling on Iraq to fully comply with all UN resolutions related to the Gulf war so as to ease the sanctions imposed on it.

The official Iraqi newspaper AL-THAWRAH yesterday cited a prominent official in the ruling Ba'th Party as calling on the leaders of the Arabian Gulf states to open a new chapter in relations with Baghdad. Citing Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, [secretary general of the Arab Popular Forces Conference], AL-THAWRAH said that future relations between the Gulf states require these countries' openness toward Iraq, which represents an important factor in the stability of this sensitive region.

Kuwait

Amir Discusses Gulf Cooperation Council Summit

LD0612180695 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic
1700 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His highness the amir of the country returned to the homeland at 1804 from the fraternal State of Oman after leading the delegation of the State of Kuwait at the meetings of the 16th Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] summit which was held in Muscat. [passage omitted]

His highness the amir made a statement after returning to the homeland. He said that the GCC's 16th summit, which was held in the Sultanate of Oman, was characterized by the vital issues which were put forward for discussion. The summit was held in very important circumstances, as far as the Gulf and Arab regions are concerned.

His highness said that as far as the Gulf region is concerned, there are numerous challenges and work must be done to face them. At the forefront of the challenges are the dangers resulting from greed and hostile and expansionist tendencies. In addition to these, one should mention all the things liable to threaten the security and stability of the region and divert their efforts and resources from the process of development and from achieving more prosperity for the good of the region's peoples and the peoples of the fraternal and friendly states. [passage omitted]

His highness the amir stressed that the eagerness to boost cooperation in the various fields of life between the Gulf peoples is strong and collective. [passage omitted]

Qatar

Paper: Appointment of Saudi 'Violation' of GCC Charter

NC0712112595 Paris AFP in English
0907 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Doha, Dec 7 (AFP)—Qatar said Thursday [7 December] its amir walked out of a summit in Muscat because Gulf Arab leaders named a new head for their alliance without obtaining unanimous support.

The selection of a Saudi at the expense of a Qatari as Gulf Cooperation Council secretary general was "a fundamental violation" of the GCC charter because Qatar's objections were ignored, the official AL-RAYAH newspaper said.

Under the charter founding the GCC in 1981, the secretary general must be approved unanimously by the six members states of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

"Our country believes that a fundamental violation, not a procedural one, took place, affecting GCC decisions and the way it must deal with Gulf issues," AL-RAYAH said.

The unprecedented walkout at the closing session of the annual summit "reflects the concern of our country to make sure relations among GCC members are based on respect of the charter," it said.

"Qatar is against nobody," AL-RAYAH said. Doha "has contributed and contributes much to ensure the success" of the GCC and it cannot be "the target of outbidding" in this regard.

Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, attending his first summit after becoming leader of Qatar in a bloodless June coup, had proposed Qatar's deputy foreign minister 'Abd-al-Rahman al-'Atiyah as the new GCC head.

But Saudi Arabia and the four other Gulf states appointed Saudi diplomat Jamil al-Hujaylan as the new GCC head, Qatari officials charged.

Shaykh Hamad, who diplomats said has taken a hard line toward Saudi Arabia, was the first GCC leader to walk out of a GCC summit since the organization was founded.

Qatar raised doubts about whether it would play host to the next Gulf summit and whether it would even stay in the organization.

Saudi Arabia

Crown Prince Gives King Fahd Greetings From GCC

LD0612193495 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1850 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 6 Dec — The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, may God help him, this evening received at his residence at the King Faysal specialized hospital His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd- al-'Aziz, crown prince, deputy prime minister and commander of the National Guard. The crown prince conveyed to the custodian of the two holy mosques the greetings and appreciation of their highnesses and their excellencies the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council member countries who ended their summit in Muscat today, and who wished the custodian of the two holy mosques good health and wished to God to protect him from any mishap.

Minister: GCC Statement 'Forced' on Participants

JN0712123895 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 7 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Culture and Information Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi has said that the statement issued by the Muscat Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] summit was drafted in advance and forced on the GCC summit.

The minister added: We as well as all people are aware that the provisions of the statement regarding Iraq do not reflect the views of the people of the region. As a matter of fact, these provisions do not reflect the convictions and positions of all leaders of the Gulf states. The developments that preceded the convocation of the 16th GCC summit do not harmonize with the policies set forth in this statement. Moreover, the statements and appeals made by Gulf officials demanding a revocation of the Iraq sanctions and urging efforts to effect inter-Arab reconciliation conflict with the provisions of the statement regarding Iraq enshrined in the Muscat summit statement.

The culture and information minister went on to say: The party that forced this statement on the GCC summit was angered by the fact that there is increasing support for a revocation of the Iraq sanctions by Arabs, Muslims, East Europeans, and West Europeans. That is why it pursued a method indicative of frustration over Iraq's fulfillment of its obligations per UN Security Council Resolution 687. This reflects a ruthless desire to maintain the unfair embargo clamped on the people of Iraq.

The minister reiterated that Iraq will persevere with its cooperation with the Special Commission headed by Rolf Ekeus, and that it will not allow any obstacles to stand in the way of revoking the sanctions.

Decrees Appoint Adviser to Saddam, Finance Minister

JN0712122095 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1155 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Dec (INA) — A republican decree was issued today appointing Hatim Hamdan al-'Azzawi, chief of the Presidential Office, as an adviser to the president of the republic. The decree allows Hatim Hamdan al-'Azzawi to bear the title of minister and receive the salary and allowances of a minister.

Republican Decree No. 332 was issued appointing Finance Minister Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir as chief of the Presidential Office.

Republican Decree No. 333 was also issued appointing Hikmat Mizban Ibrahim, chief of the Financial Control Office, as minister of finance.

Saddam Chairs Economic Committee Meeting

JN0612184995 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect and preserve him, chaired a meeting for the Economic Affairs Committee. The meeting was attended by Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan.

Assembly Discusses People's Councils Law

JN0612210895 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] The National Assembly this evening held a session chaired by its Speaker 'Abd-al-Baqi 'Abd-al-Karim al-Sa'dun. The session was devoted to continuing the debate of a law on local people's councils.

The National Assembly hosted Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz, chairman of the committee assigned the drafting of the law on local people's councils. The session was also attended by members of the committee, who include Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Hamzah al-Zubaydi, Interior Minister Muhammad Zimam 'Abd-al-Razzaq, Justice Minister Shabib Lazim al-Maliki, Finance Minister Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir, and Mundhir Ibrahim al-Shawi, head of the Legal Department at the Presidential Office.

The Assembly discussed the provisions of the law relating to the duties of the local people's council in the governorate. These duties include supervision of, and following up the implementation of the housing and construction plan, supervising the implementation of the various state service projects, protecting the governorate's tradition and history, and fostering the cultural and artistic issues to improve the governorate's cultural level.

The Assembly also discussed the duties of the local people's council in the district and subdistrict. These include proposing the yearly investment plan for the administrative unit, studying and making proposals in the current budget of the departments charged with the public services, and presenting these proposals to the administrative unit in the governorate.

The Assembly also discussed the provisions and paragraphs related to the people's council's procedures to elect a vice president of the council from among its elected members, the term in office of the local people's council, and the standing or ad hoc committees set up by the local people's council to fulfill specific tasks.

Exiled Oppositionists View Jordanian 'Federation' Plan

MM0612161595 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 6 Dec 95 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Iraqi Groups and Figures Criticize 'Federation' Plan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Iraqi figures and groups living in exile have warned about "calls and solutions" for the problem of the regime in Iraq that are "remote from the crux of the problem" and could "lead to civil wars and maybe Iraq's partition."

In a reference to endeavors made recently to persuade Iraqi opposition groups to support the so-called "Jordanian plan," which proposes the establishment of a Shiite-Sunni-Kurdish federation in Iraq and a confederation with Jordan, Iraqi figures, among them former ministers and ambassador and thinkers, said in a statement, of which AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT received a copy yesterday, that these endeavors promote "calls and slogans that have nothing to do with the real causes of the catastrophe from which the country is suffering." Because they are trying to portray the situation "as though there is a bloody conflict among the sectarian and ethnic groups of the Iraqi people, when the truth is that all groups of the Iraqi people are standing in one trench in order to achieve a comprehensive democratic change and rid the country of the repressive regime and its destructive policies."

The figures in question stressed that "Iraq can only be salvaged from the current painful situation by reinforcing national unity, safeguarding Iraqi territorial integrity, and eliminating the effects of the policies of the current regime." They warned that the endeavors in question could result in "sinister consequences that could lead to civil wars and maybe Iraq's partition and could rock the Arab and Islamic region."

In a separate statement, of which AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT received a copy yesterday, Iraqi groups and figures said that "the call promoted by some people for reconciliation among so-called basic components of the Iraqi people on a sectarian or religious basis is part of the scheme aimed at partitioning Iraq — which is rendering a great service to (Iraqi President) Saddam Husayn's regime and helping it to survive for a longer period."

Visiting Cuban Official Meets Saddam, Ramadan

Criticizes Embargo in Saddam Meeting

JN0612192595 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect and preserve him, received Pedro Miret Prieto, Cuban Council of Ministers vice president and State Council member. Miret Prieto said he greatly admires the valiant steadfastness of our people in the face of the unfair embargo imposed on them, saying there are no justifications to maintain this embargo now that Iraq has fulfilled all of its commitments.

He also voiced his admiration of the reconstruction process which our beloved country is undergoing with its own resources and under the circumstances of the unfair embargo.

Discusses Cooperation With Ramadan

NC0612204795 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1735 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 6 Dec (INA)—Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan received Pedro Miret Prieto, vice president of the Cuban Council of Ministers, and his delegation who are visiting Iraq.

During the meeting, Ramadan declared that the resumption of joint committee meetings between Iraq and fraternal and friendly countries in embargo conditions proves that these countries want to continue cooperating with Iraq under all circumstances because of Iraq's prominent status and its international economic and commercial weight.

Pedro Miret Prieto expressed Cuba's earnest desire to continue cooperating with Iraq. He referred to the strong bonds and mutual goals for the sake of which Iraq and Cuba struggle against U.S. tyranny.

Peres Holds 'Initial' Talks on U.S. Defense Pact

TA0612111095 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
6 Dec 95 p A11

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister, yesterday held initial deliberations on a proposal to set up a defense pact with the United States. Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq, Defense Ministry Director General David 'Ivri, Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich, and senior defense establishment officials participated in the discussions.

Most of the participants analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of a defense pact, but avoided presenting an unequivocal stand. Some of them said that the meaning of a defense pact is still not clear and that the U.S. Administration's position on the matter is not yet known.

It was mentioned in the discussions that a defense pact would greatly strengthen Israel's deterrence capability, that there would be a clear "boost" in strategic ties with the United States, and that it would give the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] access to advanced military technologies. The arguments opposing the pact involve the fear that Israel's military freedom of action might be harmed and concern that U.S. defense aid might be impaired.

Peres listened to the remarks of the participants and did not sum up the debate. Similar discussions will be held today with senior Foreign Ministry officials prior to Peres' visit to the United States next week.

In the defense forum, Peres was given a review of the strategic ties with the United States in preparation for his meeting with Secretary of Defense William Perry. Israel does not currently have special defense demands. Peres will ask the United States to permit the Israel Aircraft Industries to participate in a U.S. tender to launch military satellites with a Shavit rocket.

Senior political sources said after the discussions that Peres is interested in raising the level of strategic ties with the United States and will discuss the matter with President Clinton but that it is still unclear whether he will raise the defense pact proposal.

Peres on Upcoming U.S. Visit; Musa Critical of Pact

TA0712115495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
1105 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Aboard his flight to Cairo, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres was asked what impact the idea of a defense pact with the United States could have on progress on the Syrian track.

[Begin Peres recording] Anybody who presents conditions risks having to withdraw them; therefore, I am not going with conditions and requests but with proposals to be examined. I am not going to Washington with a shield; I am going for a discussion between friends. I am taking ideas, we will hear ideas, and then we will know where we stand, although not totally, because we will have to hear the Syrian response. I do not believe in leaping into the air and then falling to the ground, God forbid. [end recording]

On the flight to Cairo, our correspondent Arye Gus heard from the prime minister about the aims of his meeting with President Mubarak and the issues to be discussed.

[Begin recording] [Peres] We completed one chapter and are now beginning a new one. Before I leave for the United States, I want to hear the views of all the leaders in the region with whom we have formal ties. I have no doubt that the next stage will have a regional character in many ways and not only a bilateral one. That is why I am trying to meet with people, hear their thoughts, and present our ideas.

Yesterday's visit to Jordan was very good. In fact, there was total understanding. Each of us has fears and stories. I think it is good that I clarified to King Husayn the Palestinian parameters, what is going to happen before the end of 1996, and our opening positions in the negotiations with Syria. The better we work in coordination, the better the situation.

[Gus] Sir, there is a new issue on the agenda. Yesterday, we heard 'Amr Musa sharply attack Israel's ideas for security arrangements: the protocol with Russia and the idea of a defense pact with the United States.

[Peres] So, that is his right. He does not run Israel's foreign policy.

[Gus] But what will you tell him in Israel's name when he raises the matter?

[Peres] I do not understand what he is attacking. There are many Arab states that have relations with Russia. I have not heard him attacking them.

[Gus] He asks: Why does Israel need it?

[Peres] When he runs Israel's foreign policy, he can look for reasons why it needs it. [end recording]

'Sources' on Prospects for Syria Talks, U.S. Pact

TA0612125195 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 6 Dec 95 pp 1, 19

[Report by political correspondent Shim'on Schiffer]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A total blackout was imposed on the contents of the reports by Dr. Dennis Ross, head of the American peace team, to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres on the outcome of his talks with Syrian President al-Asad in Damascus yesterday.

Immediately upon his return from Damascus, where he conferred with the Syrian president for four hours, Ross conferred for hours with Peres, Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir, and Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich.

Highly reliable political sources believe that no breakthrough is expected in the Israeli-Syrian contacts at this stage and that even in the future the chances of that happening are virtually nil. The sources said that even if al-Asad intends to change his position in the negotiations with Israel, he will do it only during Secretary of State Warren Christopher's shuttle mission to the region on 15 December after Peres' visit to the United States.

Peres plans to give President Clinton Israel's updated position on a settlement with Syria. The sources made it clear that Peres will inform Clinton that Israel is awaiting a high-level meeting with Syria, and that it wants intense negotiations, which would last up to six months, so that a framework agreement can be reached before the Knesset elections. Peres said yesterday that "even if we wait 10 years, the price for peace with the Syrians will not go down."

[Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English on 6 December publishes on pages 1 and 2 a similar report by David Makovsky, Batsheva Tsur, and Elli Whohlgelernter, which adds: "Regarding another potential issue on Peres's agenda in the U.S., a senior official in Jerusalem sought to dampen expectations for a full-blown formal U.S.-Israel alliance. There has been opposition to the idea in Israel due to fear that this could sharply constrain Israel's military freedom of movement. 'I think we are talking about upgrading security links, but I don't think we are talking about a full alliance,' he said."]

Our correspondent Ilana Baum reports that Peres, in an address to 20 Jewish leaders from 25 states at Jerusalem's Laromme Hotel last night, said that the peace accord with Syria will bring an end to war in the Middle East. "If we reach peace with Syria, all the other 10 Arab states— except Iraq, Iran, and Libya — will sign peace accords with us. Peace is possible with all of them. We will be better off negotiating with the Palestinians on the West Bank if we do not have the Syrians waiting."

President 'Ezer Weizman told Jewish leaders who visited him yesterday that the peace agreement with Syria "is around the corner," while Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq said that only in four to six weeks will it become clear whether Israel and Syria will continue to negotiate peace. [passage omitted]

U.S. Defense Pact Said 'Worth the Limitations'

TA0712113995 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 7 Dec 95 p B1

[Commentary by Dan Margalit: "From the Back Alley to Main Street"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ever since David Ben Gurion formulated its foreign and defense policy, Israel has treated the idea of a defense pact with the United States like that of a mistress. Israel has refused to walk arm in arm with it on the main street of regional diplomacy, but has been eager to meet it in the back alley.

The Ben Gurion school based Israel's defense on the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] conventional might and the ambiguity of its nuclear option, aimed at deterring the Arab states from taking a war initiative. The defense pact idea hovered in the background without any specific aim, but was never really tested.

If such an idea was ever considered, it was directed at France and appeared in Menahem Begin's election platform in the 1950's, but died politically even before General Charles de Gaulle's return to power.

The traditional discussion of a defense pact ceased with an Israeli declaration that it is interested in defending itself by itself. The United States' sympathy for Israel's defensive war of 1967 was based on such a declaration by Moshe Dayan. But the supporters of the pact listed some advantages:

— It would deter Israel's strategic enemies from attacking. Even during the United States' deep involvement in the Vietnam war, it was clear that had Washington undertaken to bomb any potential Arab attacker to the extent it bombed Hanoi, the countries of the Middle East would have avoided going to war with Israel.

— A defense pact is an easy way out for extremists in the Arab world, who even if they tell their masses that they are not put off by a war with Israel, can get out of it with the excuse that they should not be pushed into a confrontation with the only superpower in the world.

Since these ideas were discussed, the world scene has changed. Not only has Russian Defense Minister Pavel

Grachev visited Israel, but peace accords are being signed in the region. However, the improvement in the situation in the world and the Middle East has not brought to humanity "the end of history" forecast by Francis Fukuyama, and Israel still has an interest in such an accord with the United States.

Early in the week I asked Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister, for his view, and he replied with caution that he does not reject such ideas, but added that we must be careful in case Israel gets a negative response, and that there are many obstacles. I presented him with two examples: that of France, which is covered only partially by NATO's umbrella and has an independent nuclear policy under Jacques Chirac, and that of Tansu Ciller of Turkey, who took a military initiative against the Kurds, to the displeasure of the Americans. Peres made do with saying that these examples are interesting, and the reason for that was not accidental.

Any such pact could give Israel the right to self-defense, and it would continue having exclusive rights to its ambiguous nuclear option. The Americans have such allies in Paris and Ankara, and with the very friendly relations with Washington, there is a possibility of achieving similar terms for Jerusalem.

A mutual defense accord does have limitations. But even without it, Israel does not have the freedom to act in the military field as it wishes. The cost of a pact is worth the limitations, not to mention that the United States would always be willing to dismantle the pact at Israel's request.

Such a pact, which would serve Israel against strategic enemies like Iraq and Iran, could also be an important tier in the current dialogue with Syria. Peres' meeting with Bill Clinton will involve two components: Israel will apparently agree to withdraw to the international border, but not to the 4 June lines; and in view of Syria's stubborn opposition to Israeli early warning stations on its soil, there is a necessity for a suitable substitute.

The Syrians hinted at the possibility that early warning stations on their soil could be manned by Americans. For Israel to agree to such a substitute, it wants a defense pact with the United States on similar terms to those given to the French and Turks.

The opposition (unlike government ministers) fear that Syria has in the past few days made a strategic turnaround and now agrees to a peace accord, and the defense pact issue with the United States will be one of its layers. They think a defense pact with the United States will provide a fig leaf to cover up the government's shame in giving up the country's eyes on the Hermon. Outside the Likud benches, however, there is no reason to reject such a possibility.

Peres Returns After Meeting With King Husayn

TA0612132695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has just returned to Jerusalem after a meeting in Amman with Jordan's King Husayn. Among other things, the two discussed Jordan's intention to have Israel upgrade surplus American F-16 fighters. They concluded an aviation agreement and continued discussions on a transportation agreement.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the king and the prime minister also agreed to set up a joint committee for cultural and education affairs. Peres gave King Husayn a review of the economic situation in Israel, stressing the need to cut the state budget.

Security Dialogue With Russia Welcomed

TA0512191195 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 5 Dec 95 p B1

[Commentary by Ze'ev Schiff: "There Is Something to Talk About"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The visit in Israel of the Russian defense minister accompanied by 11 generals is no less exciting and important than a visit by an Arab leader who was at war with us. Since the Six-Day War, when the Soviet Union severed its diplomatic relations with Israel, this superpower has constituted more of a threat to our security than any Arab country. It had supplied most of the weapons to the Arab countries; has aided the most extremist Arab terror gangs; and has provided a strategic umbrella to the Arabs during the war with Israel.

This picture has drastically changed after the Soviet Union collapsed and Russia's resumption of relations with Israel. We must not, however, underestimate Russia in any way whatsoever. Despite its economic weakness and the difficulties faced by its army and military industries, we must remember we are dealing with a military giant with the strategic might of a superpower. Suffice it to review the continuing developments in the Russian Air Force — whether in the sphere of advanced jet fighters or air-to-air missiles — in order to understand that Russia is still a power to be reckoned with. Even if we consider the matter from the viewpoint of the damage Israel could suffer from a rash Russian policy, we will reach the conclusion that a security dialogue between Israel and Russia is vital.

Suffice it to consider what will happen if, in addition to nuclear reactors, Russia decides to sell to Iran sophisticated weapons systems like long-range planes, in order to understand the vital importance of the security dialogue with the second largest superpower in the world. Until recently we did not know exactly what was included in the conventional weapons deals between Russia and Iran. Apparently these deals include advanced jet fighters and state-of-the-art air-to-air and surface-to-air missiles.

According to the understanding between Washington and Moscow, which was reached by U.S. Vice President Al Gore and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Russians promised that the weapons deals signed with Iran will be concluded in 1999 and that henceforth they will avoid selling Iran new technologies and weapons systems that may upset the regional balance of power. Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev is more familiar about these deals and his country's policy than anyone else, especially in view of the fact that he plans to visit Iran in the near future.

The Russian Army, which is facing a serious financial crisis, is interested in the weapons deals with Iran. At the same time, some of the top generals doubt the wisdom shown by the Russian Government in selling nuclear reactors to Russia's fundamentalist neighbor. If they mistake Iran's nuclear intentions, they will end up with an unstable nuclear neighbor.

One can also find at the top echelon of the Russian Army unusual opinions regarding the Israeli-Syrian conflict. Some Russian generals claim that from the purely military point of view it will be a mistake on Israel's part to give up its military positions on the Golan Heights, and that it had better take into consideration changes for the worse in post-al-Asad Syria. Therefore it must be extremely scrupulous regarding stable military arrangements in the event of a withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

The visit by the Russian defense minister in Israel carries a lot of symbolic weight. Even if no deal is implemented in the wake of this visit and the countries settle for basic memorandums of understanding between their respective defense ministries, this would constitute an achievement. It also constitutes another indication that Israel has broken the circle of isolation it had been subjected to in the past.

We should emphasize this in light of the voices which have criticized the visit of the Russian defense minister. Some wrote that Israel should have postponed the visit because Grachev is held responsible for the massacre of civilians in Chechnya and because he is a controversial figure in Russia itself.

Had we used these criteria toward every guest arriving in Israel from Africa, South America, and even toward American generals who have fought in Vietnam, our list of guests would have greatly dwindled. Some Lebanese Christian leaders who have been warmly welcomed in Israel were murderers. We are also begging that al-Asad, who was responsible for the terrible massacre in Hamah, come over and give us a hug. Israel's defense and foreign policies cannot be conducted on the basis of Betzelem's criteria.

The Israeli-Russian security dialogue is only at an initial stage. There is no shortage of issues to discuss, from issues related to radical Islam, through antiterror combat measures and the need to curb the weapons deals in the region, to the war against organized crime which has reached Israel from Russia. Not all of these issues relate to the Russian Defense Ministry and some Russian intelligence branches have already created formal links with Israel.

As for military deals, it is assessed that Israel can strike deals with the Russian military industries amounting to approximately $100 million annually. The deals involved are mainly the upgrading of outdated Russian weapons which had been supplied to other countries. The Russians can perform most of the work themselves, but Israel has a unique knowledge of fitting Western systems to Russian weapons systems for countries that cannot purchase new Western equipment.

Minister Tzur, Indyk Discuss Agricultural Quotas

TA0612134095 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV ('ASAQIM supplement) in Hebrew 6 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Dalya Mazori]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel and the United States disagree on the scope of export quotas on tax-exempt agricultural produce.

According to an agreement between the two countries, the United States will enjoy customs benefits when exporting agricultural produce to Israel; however, it was decided that duty-free quotas would be agreed upon with regard to sensitive products. [sentence as published]

Beyond these quotas, the United States will have to pay customs tariffs that are slightly lower than those applied to other countries.

The dispute is over the import of poultry, refrigerated beef, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Israel is opposed to the importation of poultry without customs duties, while the United States insists on a quota of 8,000 tonnes per year.

As for refrigerated beef, Israel proposed a quota of 500 tonnes whereas the United States is demanding 5,000 tonnes. With regard to fruits and vegetables, Israel proposed a quota of 1,000 tonnes of apples annually, while the United States demands 10,000 tonnes.

Israel is also opposed to customs-exempt imports of tomatoes, fresh grapes, onions, garlic, peaches, and almonds. The United States is seeking import quotas on all of these.

Agriculture Minister Ya'aqov Tzur met U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk to discuss the dispute. At the meeting, the agriculture minister expressed his concern and disappointment over the U.S. proposals. Tzur said that the proposals were exaggerated and totally unacceptable, asserting that they would seriously harm Israeli farmers. At the meeting, Tzur stressed to the American ambassador that Israel was still prepared to improve the import conditions for several products but he was not ready to accept the inflated U.S. demands, which could lead to another crisis.

Ambassador Indyk stated that he would report to Washington on the minister's position and promised that the United States would be sensitive to Israel's problems.

In the meantime it was agreed that the negotiations between the two countries would continue under Agriculture Ministry Deputy Director Tzvi Alon. Mr. Alon reported that agreement on quotas had been reached on a number of products including frozen beef, lamb, cold-water fish, shrimp and prawns, powdered milk, citrus fruit, frozen vegetables, sausages, processed meat, and gefilte fish.

Peres Urged To Reject IDF Multiyear Plan

TA0612162795 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 6 Dec 95 p B1

[Commentary by Aluf Ben: "Courage To Make a Change Before the Elections]

[FBIS Translated Text] The new IDF [Israel Defense Forces] multiyear plan, Mirqam [Composite] 2000, reveals a contradiction in Israel's foreign and defense policy. Israel's leaders have been stating that the Middle East has changed, and that the threats Israel is currently facing are not from its neighboring countries, which Rabin termed "the past enemies," but from distant countries such as Iran and Iraq which oppose both the U.S. supremacy and the peace process in the region. At the same time, the same leaders are still building and preparing their army for a war against the old enemies.

The buildup plan, just as the occasional war games, show that the IDF is still preparing for the Yom Kippur War. The military planners envision a war with Syria, possibly joined by other countries, in which thousands of Arab tanks charge at Israeli defense lines, and the IDF repels the assault and conquers essential territory, forcing the enemy to ask for a cease fire.

Yitzhaq Rabin believed that a military buildup is an essential part of peace moves, and ordered the IDF power structure not to change before a comprehensive peace is attained with the neighboring countries and the Palestinians. The army's top brass believe that signed agreements are not enough and that, until peace takes hold, the IDF must always be ready for an imminent war.

Major General 'Uzi Dayan, head of the General Staff Planning Branch, believes that the threats against Israel should be graded according to their severity, and that the army must be built according to the list. The threat of war with Syria comes first, as long as there is no peace agreement with them. The distant Iranian and Iraqi threats are evolving slowly, and require thinking out and planning a response. Dayan does not believe that the army can be downsized at this time.

While the army prepares for a previous war, it ignores changes that have taken place in the Middle East since that war was fought. The Arabs are the same Arabs and the Jews are the same Jews, but the leaders on both sides have lost their freedom of decision and operation. In the past, Israel and its neighbors needed the support of a major superpower before launching a skirmish. Their strategic dependence has now become absolute, since the collapse of the USSR and the Gulf War established the United States as the region's policeman who will not tolerate disturbances and will not allow anyone else to draw a gun and pull the trigger.

Israel learned this in 1991, when it had to grit its teeth in the face of incoming Iraqi Scuds, and again in 1993, when understandings attained through U.S. mediation, following Operation Accountability, stripped it of its freedom to launch an assault in Lebanon. A phone call from U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Jerusalem and Damascus put an end to the katyusha incident last week. Peres' cabinet was forced to decide that Israel "will react at a time and a place of its choosing" — just like the Shamir cabinet did during the Gulf War.

The insistence to preserve the IDF as is not without a price. Obviously, even in times of peace, Israel will have to maintain a strong army that can fend off an invasion and win a war. The defense establishment believes, however, that developing advanced technologies — in which Israel is a global leader — could achieve this goal with the use of a small and highly mobile effective force that would not require a widespread and permanent deployment of forces along the borders. This is where the main effort will be invested, according to the multiyear plan.

The IDF, however, is trying to pull a "dual modernization" stunt: It wishes to develop and absorb modern weapon systems, while upgrading the old tanks and guns; and, at the same time, stretch its standing army up to its limits in ongoing security missions in the territories and Lebanon; sustain the reserves mechanism, including thousands of tanks; increase the number of compulsory servicemen; and sustain career army officers and NCO's who enjoy fat salaries and extensive benefits.

As a result, the budgetary blanket is too short. The multiyear plan suffers a chronic shortage of resources, while buildup efforts spread in too many directions at the same time. The Air Force complains of flying time, while the Logistics Branch grieves over dwindling stocks. Gen. Dayan did take the changes on the political scene into consideration and, since he was appointed the IDF' chief planner, took steps to cancel procurement plans that would be wasteful in peacetime. Sometimes, he even succeeded: A planned upgrading project was frozen, after some 50 million shekels were spent on its development, and another project is still under debate.

Still, to make real changes, initiatives by army generals are not enough; a clear decision by the political echelons in needed. In his briefing to Shim'on Peres next month, Gen. Dayan will say that "the window of political opportunity will remain open." It will be up to Peres to decide whether he will use the open window to accelerate modernization, cancel unnecessary procurement plans, and significantly cut down the size and cost of the reserve forces; or, like his predecessor, squeeze additional budget money from the Treasury and put off making the decisions.

Under the current political circumstances and with the absolute American support his government enjoys, Peres can lower the degree of the army's preparedness, and force the IDF to prepare for the new environment and the far-off threats. This is not really risky.

As foreign minister, Peres presented a new security concept for Israel. He wrote and said that the traditional armies of thousands of tanks and artillery pieces are no longer relevant in the face of the new threats of missiles and terror; and that, in future, Israel will have to become part of a regional defense setup with the backing of a superpower, similar to Europe. The buds of regional security setups are already visible in the military cooperation between the IDF, the Jordanian Army, and the Palestinian Police, and the regimes' dependency on the American protector.

In his talks with the PLO, Peres showed he is not intimidated by the generals' threats, and rejected their demands for more and more security arrangements. As prime minister and defense minister, Peres can realize his vision. The question is: Will he have the courage to make a change before the elections?

Charges Against 'Amir Brothers Detailed

TA0612151395 (Internet) Israel Information Service in English 6 Dec 95

[Issued by Ministry of Justice spokesperson]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] An indictment against Yig'al 'Amir has been submitted by the Tel Aviv District Prosecutors Office to the Tel Aviv District Court.

In the five-page indictment, Yig'al 'Amir is accused of premeditated murder and injury under aggravating circumstances.

Yig'al 'Amir is charged with having made a decision to thwart implementation of the Oslo I Accord by attacking the leaders directing the peace process focussing primarily on Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres and Prime Minister and Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. The accused decided to kill Yitzhaq Rabin first because as the policy's navigator, Rabin represented a more tangible threat to him.

On Saturday, 4 Nov 95, the accused approached his brother Hagay and told him that he intended to attend the peace rally that evening in Tel Aviv and use his gun to kill the prime minister. Hagay tried to dissuade the accused from doing this, claiming that the heavy security around the prime minister lessened his chances of success and of remaining alive and that the way to carry this out is to use a sniper rifle equipped with telescopic sight, which they did not possess at the time.

Nevertheless without informing Hagay and Dror, the accused decided to kill the prime minister during this rally. On Saturday night, the accused loaded the magazine of his pistol with bullets he had purchased and which Hagay had made: bullet 1 — hollowpoint; bullet 2 — regular; bullet 3 — hollowpoint plus an additional four regular and four hollowpoint bullets made by Hagay.

Yig'al 'Amir loaded the magazine cartridge into his pistol, flipped on the safety lock and tucked the gun inside his pants on his right side with his shirt covering it.

'Amir left his home at approximately 19:45 hours and used public transportation to reach the intersection of Ibn Gevirol and Arlozorov Streets in Tel Aviv. From there he walked towards Malkhey Yisra'el Square where rally was being held.

The accused removed his kippa [skullcap], wandered about the area and decided to position himself in the parking lot next to City Hall, where the prime minister's and foreign minister's cars were parked. The accused stood in that spot for approximately 40 minutes and waited for the rally to end. At 21:45 hours the prime minister left the dais escorted by his bodyguards, and walked toward his car. One of them opened the car door and the prime minister prepared to step in. The accused approached the prime minister, and with the premeditated intention of murdering him, fired three bullets in his back at close range. Two bullets hit the prime minister, penetrating his body and another bullet hit the left hand of bodyguard Yoram Rubin, who tried to protect the prime minister.

A regular bullet hit the bodyguard's hand causing his 6 day hospitalization at Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv. The bullets which hit the prime minister were hollowpoint bullets. One entered his back from the right side and went through his right lung. The second bullet penetrated his left hip from behind and passed through his spleen, diaphragm and left lung. The prime minister was rushed to Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv where he died at 22:30 hours as a result of severe trauma to his lungs and spleen.

The indictment lists 47 witnesses.

The Tel Aviv District Prosecutors Office has submitted a request to the Tel Aviv District Court to hold Yig'al 'Amir in custody until the conclusion of proceedings against him. In the request, prosecuting attorney Pnina Gay wrote that the prosecution has convincing evidence proving that the respondent is guilty of carrying out the crimes attributed to him including, inter alia, police confessions, reenactments, court confessions during remand extension hearings, his apprehension immediately after the killing and expert opinions.

The custody request points out that the crimes ascribed to Yig'al 'Amir are among the most serious ones in the criminal codes. He conspired with others to kill the prime minister and devised the most frightening and terrifying schemes to carry out his plan. The conspiracy ended with the successful completion of this heinous mission which tragically cut short the prime minister's life.

Therefore, the District Prosecutor is asking that Yig'al 'Amir be held in custody until the conclusion of criminal proceedings against him.

The Tel Aviv District Prosecutors Office also submitted an eight page indictment, containing four separate charges against Yig'al 'Amir, Hagay 'Amir and Dror 'Adani to the Tel Aviv District Court.

The accused are charged based on the following legislation:

1. Conspiring to commit a murder.
2. Illegal possession of a weapon.
3. Illegal carrying of a firearm.
4. Illegal manufacturing of weapons and transferring same to another.
5. Illegal transferring of weapons to another.
6. Conspiracy to commit a crime.

The indictment includes 43 prosecution witnesses. [passage omitted]

King Husayn, Prime Minister Peres Meet in Amman

Discuss Commitment to Peace

JN0612182695 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] During His Majesty King Husayn's meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, his majesty stressed Jordan's commitment to the peace process and the need to consolidate efforts to achieve progress on all tracks to achieve a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in this region — a peace which enables this region's peoples to overcome the repercussions of decades of conflicts and to resume their march toward economic and social development.

For his part, Peres stressed the Israeli Government's commitment to continuing the peace process. He said that his visit to Jordan, the first after he assumed the post of Israeli prime minister, comes within the framework of reaffirming Israeli commitment to continuing the peace process and seeking to achieve progress on the other tracks to achieve a comprehensive peace in the region aspired by its people.

During the meeting, it was stressed that the peace process was launched from Madrid on the basis of international legitimacy to find lasting and just solutions to all conflicts in the region and to achieve stability in it. This is to prepare for the resumption of the region's development and reconstruction process and to enable its peoples to live a decent life and to cooperate for the future of the next generations. [passage omitted]

In joint press statements with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres following the talks, His Majesty King Husayn expressed his pleasure to meet with Peres and his satisfaction with the outcome of their talks. His majesty said: We are proud to be affiliated with the peace camp and are determined to do our utmost to achieve a comprehensive peace in the entire region. His majesty said: Today's meeting was a good opportunity to discuss all issues of common interest. He hoped to meet with Peres again in the future.

Asked about the chances of achieving peace between Syria and Israel, His Majesty King Husayn said: I believe that this is a dear objective that can be pursued with determination. I believe that success will be the result. On the future of the peace process in the region following Yitzhaq Rabin's death and after Peres assumed the reigns of power in Israel, his majesty said: I believe that the process is continuing and we are fully determined to achieve the noble object for the achievement of which, my friend, the soldier of peace, fell. I believe that Peres is continuing on the road to peace with full determination. God willing, all desired objectives will be achieved. We will work with full determination to achieve these noble objectives.

For his part, Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres thanked His Majesty King Husayn for his warm hospitality. He said: This is my first visit outside the country in my capacity as Prime Minister. His Majesty King Husayn is the first person I wanted to consult with regarding issues under discussion and future issues. He said: Peace between Jordan and Israel developed until it became a model for a real and promising peace. I wanted very much to meet his majesty the king before my next visit to the United States and to compare in order to serve peace and the interest of our two countries. Peres said that he sensed the support of His Majesty King Husayn, the same support his majesty showed to late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin who seriously worked toward achieving peace between the two countries.

Asked about whether he is facing difficulties in expanding his coalition government at a time when he is seeking to move forward with the peace process, the Israeli prime minister said: Coalition is coalition and the peace process is the peace process. We are not going to trade one for another. We would like to have a wider coalition in support of peace and not vice versa.

Asked if he is seeking to conclude a different agreement with the United States regarding the Syria track and about the effect of such an agreement on this track, Peres said: I believe that the real problem is how to achieve peace in the entire region. He added: We must think more about a regional framework.

In a response to a question, His Majesty King Husayn and Peres said that there is no problem regarding the transportation agreement between the two countries and that the agreement will be signed soon.

Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres left Amman this afternoon, concluding a short visit to Jordan. He was seen off by al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, the prime minister, and Marwan al-Qasim, chief of the Royal Court.

Discuss Syrian Track

TA0612193895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Report by political correspondent Shlomo Raz]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] King Husayn seems to have joined the very small group of people who are familiar with Israeli plans for promoting the negotiations with Syria. Today he held a long private conversation with Prime Minister Peres at the Raghadan Palace, and Dennis Ross' tour was discussed at length.

[Begin Husayn recording, in English] I personally agree that this is a very dear objective that will be pursued diligently and, hopefully, the result will be success. [end recording]

The king said he hopes the talks with Syria will be successful.

A clue about Ross' talks in Jerusalem and Damascus can be gleaned from a short conversation between Prime Minister Peres and his Jordanian counterpart, Zayd Bin-Shakir. Shim'on Peres said: We have received pink envelopes via Dennis Ross, but it is too soon to know what they contain. The prime minister meant that the envelope, or the tone, is quite positive, although there seems to be no change in substance as yet. [passage omitted]

The prime minister noted that his first foreign trip as prime minister was made to Jordan because Israel has special ties with that country.

[Begin Peres recording] As I said, I view these relations as a model. They are very promising relations, full of content, and they are a fitting precedent for the future of the Middle East. [end recording] [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 6 December carries Arab correspondent Ehud Ya'ari's report on the Peres-Husayn meeting, adding: "Husayn was somewhat skeptical regarding President al-Asad's readiness to make rapid progress." Ya'ari further reports: "The Jordanians say they will welcome any progress with Syria, but they advise us not to hurry, because the process with Syria will not move ahead rapidly."]

Meet With Journalists

JN0612201395 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Report over video by Kassab Samawi — italicized passages in English]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] After assuming the reigns of power as successor to late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, Shim'on Peres began his first political activity outside Israel with a visit and a meeting with His Majesty King Husayn today. This falls within a step that embodies the Jordanian and Israeli sides' commitment to continuing the peace process and bolstering bilateral action to reinforce relations and to continue building peace and reap its fruits in the interest of this region's peoples and its future generations.

Shim'on Peres arrived in Amman this morning. He was received by al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, the prime minister; Marwan al-Qasim, chief of the Royal Court; and the Israeli ambassador in Amman.

His Majesty King Husayn and His Highness Crown Prince Hasan received Shim'on Peres at Raghadan Palace. Jordanian-Israeli talks began with a meeting between his majesty and the Israeli prime minister, which was followed by an expanded meeting. [passage omitted]

After the talks, His Majesty King Husayn and Shim'on Peres met with correspondents.

[Begin recording] [Husayn] *I would like to say how happy I am to have had this opportunity to welcome the prime minister, and how satisfied I am with the talks that we have had, and how much we wish him every continued success in the times ahead, and how proud we are to belong to the peace camp, and how determined we are to see that we continue to do our utmost for a comprehensive peace in this entire region.*

It has been a wonderful opportunity for us to talk about all matters of mutual concern and I hope that we will meet again some time soon, Prime Minister.

[Peres] *I would like to thank his majesty for the most warm reception. This is my first call as the prime minister of Israel outside my country and normally the first address would be Amman and the first person I wanted really to consult about the future is his majesty the king. May I say that the peace between Jordan and Israel is being developed into and becoming a model of a real peace, of a promising peace. I think it should encourage our two people. It can serve as an indication for the future. I wanted very much to see the king before my going to the United States so we shall have an opportunity to compare notes because there is no reason why we shouldn't act in concert for the sake of peace and for the benefit of each of our countries. And I feel very obliged that his majesty has shown to me the same warmth and openness and support as he did to my predecessor the late Yitzhaq Rabin, who acted and worked so seriously to make the peace between our two countries such a meaningful and successful endeavor.*

[Unidentified correspondent] *Your Majesty, if you please. What do you think about the chances to have a peace between Israel and Syria after your talk with Mr. Peres?*

[Husayn] *I personally believe that this is a very dear objective that will be pursued diligently, and hopefully the results will be a success.*

[Correspondent] Your Majesty the King. Yesterday, Israel marked 30 days since Yitzhaq Rabin's death. You have lost a colleague, a friend, and partner to peace.

How do you see the future of the peace process under Peres' leadership?

[Husayn] The peace process is continuing with full determination and persistence to achieve the noble objectives for the attainment of which, my friend, the soldier of peace, fell a month ago. I believe that Peres is continuing on the road to peace with full determination and persistence. God willing, we will achieve the objectives and reach the desired goals.

[Correspondent] Do you support Peres in terms of continuing the peace process?

[Husayn] I support him with full warmth and determination to work together to achieve this noble objective.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] *the peace process and the same time expanding your government coalition?*

[Peres] *A coalition is a coalition and a peace process is a peace process. We are not going to trade one for another. We would like to have a wider coalition in support of peace, not a wider coalition instead of peace.*

[Correspondent] *Mr. Peres. How do you view the Syrian role in Lebanon within a final settlement, a peaceful settlement?*

[Peres] *We are now negotiating. So, I cannot really offer a volunteer view on that issue.*

[Correspondent] It has been reported that you might be seeking a different settlement with the United States. How do you see the impact of such a possible agreement on the Syrian track?

[Peres] *I think that today, the real problem is how to pacify the whole of the region and we have to think very much in regional terms. Thank you.*

[Correspondent] *Mr. Prime Minister, did you discuss Jordanian-Israeli agreements; namely, the transport agreement with his majesty?*

[Peres] *We did and ...* [Peres pauses to listen to King Husayn answer a question from another correspondent]

[Husayn] *We have no problem on any of them.*

[Correspondent] *Did you expect the signing soon?*

[Husayn] God willing. [end recording]

Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir also met with Shim'on Peres for a while in the presence of Marwan al-Qasim, chief of the Royal Court. The two sides stressed the importance of following up the completion of cooperation agreements between Jordan and Israel after reaching cooperation agreements in the fields of tourism, agriculture, water, environment, security affairs as well as other issues between the two countries.

Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres left Amman this afternoon, concluding his short visit to Jordan. He was seen off by al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, the prime minister, and Marwan al-Qasim, chief of the royal court.

His Majesty King Husayn's meeting with Peres comes before Peres' scheduled meeting with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak tomorrow and his meeting with Yasir 'Arafat, president of the Palestinian Authority, at Erez crossing on Friday, 8 December.

Chiefs of Staff Chairman Meets U.S. General

JN0612210695 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General 'Abd-al-Hafiz Mar'i al-Ka'abinah met with General John Jumper, deputy commander of the U.S. Central Command and chief of the Air Force component. Al-Ka'abinah discussed with the American General the situation in the region and military cooperation issues.

Army Responds to Minister Junblatt's Criticism

NC0712083395 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 7 Dec 95

[Statement issued by the Army Command's Guidance Directorate; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Walid Junblatt, minister of displaced persons' affairs, has for some time been making statements that affect the military establishment's role and unity. These statements are far from constructive political criticism and go beyond the legal limits of immunity when undermining the pillars of national accord.

Regretting these stands, the Army Command calls on him to abandon the mentality of war and destructive gambles and live up to the duties of the public office that his excellency occupies.

The Army Command would like to emphasize that the Army's security tasks will continue and will remain comprehensive until everybody realizes it is impossible to turn back the clock. The time is also past when one could use criticism of one branch of the Army today in an attempt to destroy another branch tomorrow. These tactics have been exposed; at this time they only serve the interests of the enemy and must be shunned and prevented.

Yesterday Minister Junblatt in two radio and press interviews continued criticizing the Army. He called on the Army to stay out of politics. He also touched on the election bill, saying that some people want it to meet specific requirements. He noted that Damascus had promised not to abandon its major allies. He asked: Why should the south enjoy privileged treatment in the elections when people in the occupied border zone are free to come and go? And if they do, why should other areas not enjoy the same privileges?

Report on Developments in the South

NC0612192395 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The situation in the south is still tense in the wake of fresh military operations. Our correspondent reports that the Lebanese Army's deserted barracks in al-Nabatiyah came under concentrated Israeli bombardment with 155-mm artillery as of 1500 today. This region and the outskirts of Kafr Tibnit and upper al-Nabatiyah came under heavy-caliber machine-gun fire.

At 1510, the resistance launched a rocket attack against the al-Dabshah position.

Today's clashes in Tallusah in the central sector claimed five lives, four of the resistance and an Israeli soldier. Three of Lahd's [South Lebanese Army] men were wounded when a bomb exploded under a patrol along the Sujud road. Israeli planes were involved in the confrontation as well, raking the area around Tallusah. Israeli helicopters and fighter planes fired air-to-surface missiles and heavy machine guns.

Israeli radio today said that an Israeli soldier was wounded when a Sagger missile fired by the resistance at an Israeli position in al-Tayyibah exploded.

The Amal movement operations room has announced that one of its groups attacked and engaged an Israeli patrol in Wadi al-Saluqi this morning. According to the movement, casualties were transported by Israeli helicopters.

Also, the Iqlim al-Tuffah hills were bombarded by Israeli artillery from al-Zaffatah. Shells reached al-Jabal al-Rafi', Jisr Habbush, and the outskirts of Shaqra, Majdal Silm, Tulin, Qabrikha, and al-Qantarah.

IDF Soldier Killed, 3 Injured

TA0612175795

[FBIS Editorial Report] Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1700 GMT on 6 Dec reports: "It has just been reported that an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldier, 20-year-old Sergeant 'Eran Sabag from Be'er Ya'aqov, was killed today in south Lebanon. Our Army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that he was killed in a clash with terrorists in the eastern sector of the security zone this morning."

Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el at 1605 GMT on 6 December carries a live report by correspondent in the north Ilan Ro'e, stating that "three IDF soldiers were slightly injured in south Lebanon today in the course of this tough day for the IDF troops," in which "fierce gunfire was exchanged between the terrorists and the IDF troops."

The report carries the remarks of Brigadier General Beni Lidor, head of the Northern Command staff, recorded "a few minutes ago," where the general describes the 6 December events in south Lebanon: "Several Sagger missiles were fired at our troops around 1100 this morning. One missile hit a place where soldiers were deployed. As a result, one soldier sustained a very slight injury. At the same time, Saggers and heavy mortar fire were directed at our tanks and other troops in the eastern sector. There were no casualties. Around 1600 today, there was an onslaught of mortar and evidently also antitank fire on 'Ali al-Tahir ridge, probably from al- Nabatiyah. Luckily for us, there were no casualties in this action either."

Ro'e adds: "The northern border is quiet at this time."

'Large-Scale' Bombing Operation Foiled in North

NC0712064495 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper AL-NAHAR reports that security agencies in the north have foiled a large-scale bombing operation. The operation, due to start at the beginning of December, was to have targeted the Lido cabaret in Tripoli, the Palma and Naji beach resorts in al-Bahsas, and vice dens in al-Qalamun. It was to have involved the assassination of political and religious figures, including Fathi Yakan, the head of the Islamic Group's parliamentary bloc, Tripoli mufti Shaykh Taha al-Sabunji, and Islamic Unification Movement leader Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban.

Members of the group have been arrested. They said their goal was to clear the city of the filth of the devil, as they put it.

Israeli 'Demand' for Defense Pact With U.S. Viewed

JN0612130495 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0820 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 6 Dec (SANA) — The newspaper AL-THAWRAH says Israel clearly concentrates on the security issue. The paper adds: The Israelis have put this issue in more than one context and presented it everywhere and before all international parties, including the Russians, who know better than any other party that this Israeli concern is overblown and that the reverse is true. The Russians also know that their weapons once helped to repulse various acts of aggression, and reduce the damage and the area of the Arab land the Israelis occupied.

In an article today by Dr. Fayiz al-Sayigh, director general of the Syrian Arab News Agency, the paper says: Peres surpasses his successor in focusing on this issue. He exaggerates more than him in this regard and claims that he is less intransigent than others in dealing with the peace process. He shows great interest in this issue to the extent of demanding an official defense treaty with the United States. Peres makes this demand as if the United States failed or hesitated in the past about meeting Israel's security requirements or supporting it militarily to the extent that Israel now possesses an arsenal of conventional and nuclear weapons. This arsenal threatens not only the security of the region, but also world security and peace, especially if Israeli extremism reaches the nuclear reactor, just as an extremist reached Yitzhaq Rabin.

The newspaper adds: Thus, now the image seems reversed, despite the fact that the recent world changes, particularly following the end of the Cold War came in favor of the United States and Israel and its security. At the same time, the Arab land is still under occupation, and the Arab citizens are still subject to daily shelling by the modern Israeli war machine. Their rights are still hostage to moods, affiliations, and collusion of those who have usurped these rights. An entire people are still suffering from displacement and loss.

AL-THAWRAH asks: What kind of security Israel's leaders talking about? Are they talking about the security of the Dimona nuclear reactor, or about the security of the largest arsenal of sophisticated weapons — with which arms depots and factories are teeming — that search for enemies beyond the borders of peace which is being negotiated?

The paper answers: It is the security of ambitions, long-term aggressive perspectives, and the military power which is swelling up day after day, away from any deterrent or future responsibility that would result from this malignant tumor.

Concluding its article, AL-THAWRAH says: The Arabs are the party in dire need of security and safety. They were and are still the victims of aggression. Their land was occupied. They have the right to fear future occupations if the super powers continued nourishing Israeli with weapons and money.

Press Urges Israeli Good Faith, Reiterates Peace Stand

JN0612090095 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 6 Dec 95

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "The Road to Peace," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: During his meeting with the U.S. coordinator for the peace process, his excellency President Hafiz al-Asad has renewed Syria's commitment to the peace process and underlined its serious efforts to achieve the objective of this process, which is extremely important, particularly since the U.S. Administration is currently showing interest in the peace process, expressing determination to continue its peace efforts, and asserting the importance of advancing the peace process.

AL-THAWRAH adds: The protracted peace process has lent credence to the Arab position, which adheres to a just and comprehensive peace. It has also shown that Syria responds favorably to peace efforts in the hope of upholding the components of the peace process and vindicating the relevant resolutions. It is definitely clear that it was Israel's circumvention of these resolutions which precluded progress in the peace talks. These resolutions provide for a complete Israeli withdrawal, and deem inadmissible the acquisition of others' territory by force. The failure to make progress in the talks was also caused by the alternatives to a just and comprehensive peace Israel has opted for; namely, separate deals, which have failed to provide regional security and stability.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: Syria has constantly made room for progress by its favorable response to U.S. efforts in particular, and to international efforts in general. However, the achievement of such progress is contingent upon a wholehearted Israeli effort to remove obstacles and uphold the bases of the peace process so that a clear vision may guide us to our goal. The aim should be the implementation of clear resolutions. Israel's conduct should be clear and spotless.

Under the headline "There Can Be No Peace Without Regaining the Territories and Rights," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: It is impossible to achieve peace in the region without a full implementation of the relevant

UN Security Council resolutions, which ensure the region's stability and security. Syria cannot accept any alternative to the international community's resolutions, which call for reversing occupation and nullifying the measures taken by the occupation authorities, which are in violation of the Geneva and The Hague Conventions and other international conventions that uphold the sovereignty of states as well as the peoples' right to a free life.

AL-BA'TH notes the assurances given to U.S. Coordinator Dennis Ross in Damascus that Syria views peace as a demand and a cherished goal that should be pursued by the entire region. The paper indicates that Israel has continued to disobey the United Nations and its resolutions. Since the convocation of the Madrid conference, Israel has not expressed a willingness to subscribe to the peace enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council and UN General Assembly resolutions.

AL-BA'TH adds: It is Israel which is constantly circumventing and prevaricating. If they really aim to disavow circumvention and prevarication, Israeli policymakers only have to make up their minds by taking a shortcut to peace, which is a straight line.

AL-BA'TH notes the UN position taken the day before yesterday when the United Nations renewed its rejection of occupation and asserted that Israeli decisions and laws are null and void, and that Israeli withdrawal from the Golan is a prerequisite for peace.

AL-BA'TH concludes by saying: Given the clarity of the hard facts enshrined in the relevant UN resolutions, why should Israel's maneuvering continue? Why is time being wasted when the final outcome will remain unchanged, no matter how long it takes?

Radio Calls For 'Total Peace for a Total Withdrawal'

JN0612173795 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: When he received Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the Middle East peace process, yesterday, President Hafiz al-Asad stressed that Syria adheres to the peace process and is serious about achieving the goal of peace. Syria, which is seeking peace as its strategic option, is honest to that option and to its peaceful trend and welcomes any effort or initiative to promote the process and achieve its goal of just and comprehensive peace that is based on international legitimacy, the Security Council's resolutions, and the principle of land for peace.

In compliance with these bases and principles and with its firm position, Syria calls for total peace for a total withdrawal. This Syrian position is clear and is in full harmony with international legitimacy and resolutions because Syria is seeking true peace. Out of its understanding of the importance of peace to the present and future of the region, Syria responded to international efforts and went to the Madrid conference to achieve the goals of the peace process. This process, however, has stumbled over the past years because of Israel's attempts to circumvent the principles of that process and to make as much gains as possible at the expense of peace and the Arab side.

The United States and the international community are talking about the existence of a real opportunity to promote peace talks on the Syrian-Israeli track and to advance the whole peace process toward its goal. Therefore, Israel should move from words to deeds if it really wants peace. The desired just and comprehensive peace requires a real Israeli pledge to implement international legitimacy resolutions and to abide by the U.S. initiative. This means a withdrawal to beyond the 4 June 1967 borderline and from southern Lebanon. As total withdrawal constitutes a basic condition for a just and comprehensive peace, it is necessary to make equal [mutasawiyah], parallel [mutawaziyah], and equitable [mutakafi'ah] security arrangements on both sides of the border.

By insisting on comprehensive peace in total harmony with international legitimacy, Syria is reflecting its concern about the future of the region and world peace. Out of this concern, Syria adheres to the peace process and is seriousness about achieving its goal. So, it is time for Israel to understand that real peace will guarantee the present and future of the region. He who wants peace should place it above all other considerations. Talk is not enough, and words should be translated into deeds. Syria is serious about advancing the peace process toward its clear and definite goal and it is also ready to translate this seriousness into tangible action.

Iraqi Committee Warns Against 'Suspect' Partition Moves

JN0512163995 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 4 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, SANA — The Committee for Coordinating National Democratic Action in Iraq [lajnat tansiq al-'amal al-qawmi al-dimuqrati fi al-'iraq] has warned against moves by forces that seek to partition Iraq, undermine its social fabric, and affect the future of its generations.

In a statement yesterday, the committee said suspect proposals will fail once again because the people of

Iraq are vigilant and alert. The Iraqi people will not be taken in by calls that threaten their entity and territorial integrity.

The statement appealed to all Iraqi nationalist forces to look out for suspect calls, such as the calls for safe havens or dividing Iraq on ethnic, sectarian, or regional considerations. These proposals are primarily targeted against Iraq's unity and people.

The statement pointed out that Iraqi nationalist forces succeeded in achieving historic victories and launching popular revolutions and uprisings. In doing so, these forces depended on the unified will of the Iraqi people. In addition, these forces have embraced Iraq's legitimate aspirations for democratic freedoms and national independence, as well as as Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and control of its own resources.

The statement said the Iraqi nationalist movement is still leading the struggle of the people to confront the dictatorial authority, set up a pluralistic and democratic authority, and thwart the objectives of the forces that seek to partition Iraq.

Hungary's Dunai Arrives, Meets With Leaders

Meets Economy Minister al-'Imadi

JN0212154095 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 2 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Muhammad al-'Imadi, economy and foreign trade minister, received Imre Dunai, Hungarian industry and trade minister, and his delegation this morning. The meeting was attended by the Hungarian ambassador in Damascus and Dr. Ratib al-Shallah, president of the Syrian Federation of Chambers of Commerce and chairman of the Damascus Chamber of Commerce.

The talks addressed the friendly bilateral trade and economic ties and the ways to enhance, promote, and expand them in the interest of the two countries and peoples.

Imre Dunai arrived in Damascus this morning at the head of an official Hungarian delegation on a two-day visit to the Syrian Arab Republic.

Confers With Prime Minister

JN0212201795 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1915 GMT 2 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At 1830 today, Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi received Imre Dunai, Hungarian minister of industry and trade, and his delegation. The Hungarian ambassador in Damascus attended.

Dunai relayed the greetings of Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn to Mahmud al-Zu'bi, who asked him to relay similar greetings to Mr. Horn. The talks addressed bilateral cooperation and the means to promote it.

Dr. Salim Yasin, deputy prime minister for economic affairs, received Imre Dunai at 1800 today. The Hungarian ambassador in Damascus attended.

The two officials reviewed economic, technical, and scientific cooperation and the prospects for further enhancing cooperation.

Meets Vice President Khaddam

JN0312144495 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 3 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam received Imre Dunai, Hungarian minister of industry and trade, at 1200 [1000 GMT] today. The Hungarian ambassador in Damascus attended. Discussion during the meeting dealt with bilateral relations and means to develop them.

Al-Shar' Confers With Japanese Official

JN0612204395 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1915 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' received (Yuji Ikida), Japanese Foreign Ministry official in charge of following up the Middle East peace process. The meeting was attended by the Japanese ambassador in Damascus. Talks centered on latest developments in the peace process, as well as relations between Syria and Japan.

Afghanistan

Rabbani Criticizes Pakistan, Calls For UN Session

LD0612120695 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1012 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Report by Leonid Kotov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI, December 6 (Itar-Tass) — President of Afghanistan Borhanoddin Rabbani has held Pakistan guilty of creating an explosive situation in his country, resulting from Islamabad's support to the opposition Islamic movement Taliban, and has appealed to call an emergency session of the U.N. General Assembly. An Afghan foreign ministry spokesman said in Kabul today that the head of the Afghan state has dispatched a letter about this to U.N. Secretary-General Butrus Butrus-Ghali.

Meanwhile, government military aircraft heavily bombarded Talib positions located in the south of the capital last night. According to reports received in New Delhi, bomb strikes were carried out on a concentration of men and military equipment belonging to Taliban supporters in the district of Rish Khvor, where a counter-offensive had been preparing on regular troops.

Iran-Pakistan Conflict in Afghanistan Viewed

96LH0014A Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 8 Sep 95 p 15

[Article by Rahimallah Afridi: "Afghanistan: Open Iran-Pakistan Conflict"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iran-Pakistan conflict in Afghanistan has undergone a critical development in past weeks. Both Tehran and Islamabad have begun open efforts to overturn and rearrange existing alliances in order to embark on a proxy war aimed at the republics of Central Asia.

No longer concealed is the Iranian-Pakistani competition or conflict in Afghanistan for greater influence in a country that is a complex tribal mosaic. Each country has a long border with Afghanistan and is receiving Afghan immigrants who are creating a demographic and economic burden because of the ethnic and linguistic commonalities among these countries. The competition became clearly visible when the Pakistani foreign minister, Sardar Asef 'Ali Khan, paid a six-day visit to the major Afghan cities. He was not received warmly, however: Kabul criticized his visit to the stronghold of the leader of the Uzbek militias, General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, who is allied with opposition leader Golboddin Hekmatyar. 'Ali Khan's visit was followed by the visit to Kabul of an Iranian delegation headed by Deputy Foreign Minister 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi and also the Iranian president's adviser for Afghan affairs, Ayatollah Ebrahimi. The step was seen as a move to counter Pakistan's attempt to weaken the government of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, whom Islamabad sees as a protege of the Iranians and Indians, traditional enemies of Pakistan, which fought three destructive wars with India in 1948, 1965, and 1971.

Minorities Against the Majority

The difference between the two countries' policy on the Afghan crisis can be seen clearly in their position toward the government of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, which lacks a legitimate legal mandate to continue ruling. Iran, which, in addition to the linguistic and minority aspect, has ethnic sympathy with the influential Tajik minority in Kabul, prefers minority rule to rule by the Pashtun majority because the former will mean cooperation with the Shiite minority. While Iranian influence in Kabul is being continued through the Shiite minority, Pakistan is calling for a government in which all the Afghan factions participate; this because the Pashtun majority's victory and its winning of power and influence in the government would have serious repercussions for the Pakistani Pashtuns located near the Afghan border. These Pashtuns have always looked more to Kabul than to Islamabad. Nevertheless, Islamabad does not want to support and aid the government of the Afghan president, who it thinks has gone too far in his relations with India and has abandoned his relations with Pakistan.

Pakistan, for its part, is working with the factions to prepare a coordinated military plan to weaken the government of the Afghan president, who, according to AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI sources, recently tried to persuade the governor of Nangarha province, 'Abdol Qader Khan, to open an Indian consulate in Jalalabad, the capital of the province, which borders Pakistan, to be a center of espionage against Pakistan. The governor, who is close to Pakistan, declined the offer.

Return of Taleban, Hekmatyar

To counter all this, a secret meeting was held between representatives of the Afghan Taleban movement, which, having surfaced late in the past year, now controls a third of Afghan territory and is fighting the government in the southwest of the country—its fighters are deployed on the outskirts of Kabul—and the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], led by Golboddin Hekmatyar, which has won victories on the capital's eastern front. Afghan sources say that the two sides opposed to the Afghan president's government agreed on a military plan to start from Maydan Province, southwest of Kabul. The two sides had fought pitched battles with each other early this year, as a result of which Hezb-e Eslami fighters evacuated their strategic positions south of the capital Chaharsiab—a serious setback for them.

During his recent visit to Afghanistan, the Pakistani foreign minister was eager to show interest in Mazar-e Sharif, which has been an object of interest for Iranian diplomacy since the fall of Najibollah in April 1992, the main reasons being:

First, the Uzbek ethnic minority to which Dostam belongs fits in with Iran's intention to unite the minorities to oppose the Pashtun majority.

Second, the north, and particularly Mazar-e Sharif, borders Uzbekistan, which rejects Iran's presence in the region. Because Dostam sympathizes with the Uzbek-Turkish ethnic group (Turkey is Iran's chief competitor in the region), the latter recently dictated firmer and stronger relations with Dostam to encircle Uzbekistan and strike a blow against the Turkish presence in the region.

Third, Dostam played an important military role in overthrowing Najibollah. He is a growing military force and bases himself on the ethnic factor at a time when it has become very important following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the escape of the ethnic genie from its bottle. He, therefore, cannot be ignored.

However, given the complications, ramifications, and regional and international repercussions of Afghan politics, General Dostam abandoned Iran and became involved in an Uzbek-Turkish-Pakistani pact to weaken Iranian influence and, consequently, to weaken Indian influence also.

Observers think that Iranian policy is based on maintaining the state of chaos and disorder in Afghanistan to prevent Pakistan from establishing relations with the Islamic republics on the other side of Afghanistan, which forms a bridge to any such expected trade. Pakistan's cities, that is, are closer to the cities of Central Asia than Iran's cities. Therefore, any delay in bringing about peace in Afghanistan delays Pakistan's access to the markets of Central Asia and gives Iran a chance to tie the economy of these republics to its own.

Khalili Denies Iran Interfering in Internal Affairs

LD0612143295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abdol-Karim Khalili, head of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] of Afghanistan, refuted some sources' allegation that the Islamic Republic of Iran attempted to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. In an interview with a correspondent of the external services' news unit, he said: We consider Iranian delegations' visits to Afghanistan as efforts to restore peace and to end fighting in Afghanistan. The visits are by no means an interference in Afghan affairs.

Khalili refuted the claim that Iran is building an airport in Bamian town. There are now two airports in Bamian town, therefore there is no need for a new airport for the town, he added.

Factions Propose New Members for UN Council

LD0612145795 Tehran IRNA in English 1447 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec. 6, IRNA — Two Afghan groups, supporting rival sides, have proposed some more personalities to be named in the United Nations proposed council.

The National Islamic Movement of northern Afghanistan led by one of President Borhanoddin Rabbani's arch rivals, Uzbek warlord General 'Abdol-Rashid Dostam, has suggested ten names while Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Movement] of Ayatollah 'Asef Mohseni which is ally of the Kabul government has proposed two names for the UN proposed council.

Confirming it to IRNA, the spokesman of UN special mission on Afghanistan Sadek Abu-Nafisa, however, would not tell whether the two factions have asked their nominees to be added to the actual 28- man line-up or be put in the place of some of the personalities already named in the council.

Mohseni himself is the member of the proposed council announced his proposal to the UN special envoy on Afghanistan Mahmoud Mestiri last month.

The UN peace plan which has been accepted by the Afghan government and several other factions, has run into difficulties mainly because of the refusal of the Taleban militia which is involved in fierce clashes with Rabbani's forces.

Council Discusses Military, Political Situation

LD0612182795 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The presidential press office reported to BAKHTAR that the session of the High State Council — chaired by esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan — was held this afternoon. At this session, the country's military and political situation was discussed. It was pointed out that the forces of the Islamic army have better combat preparedness and a high level of military awareness, more than any other time. They have the full capability to defend the country against any foreign aggression.

At this session of the High State Council a number of other issues were also discussed and necessary decisions were made.

No Accord in Coordination Council-Taleban Talks

LD0712113395 Tehran IRNA in English 1010 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 7, IRNA — A spokesman for Golboddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] annouced here Thursday [7 December] that despite lengthy talks between representatives of the Taleban group and the Coordination Council for making coalition against Afghan Government, no agreement had yet been reached.

The radio 'Echo of Freedom,' belonging to the Hezb, quoted the spokesman as saying that an agreement was due to be reached between the council and the Taleban this week, but it had been postponed due to certain obstacles. He added that the coucil awaited the Taleban's view in this regard.

The spokesman, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that in case of the agreement between the council and the Taleban, war would be halted in Kabul and Rabbani's government would have to resign under political and military pressures.

Moreover, he added that senior representatives of the Coordination Council, including 'Abdol Karim Khalili's wing in Hezb-e Wahdat Eslami [Islamic Unity Party], General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam's National Islamic Movement and Hekmatyar's Islamic Party, are busy holding talks in Mazar-e Sharif in Balkh province to adopt a unified policy towards current developments in Afghanistan.

He rejected claims by leader of the National Salvation Front Sebghatollah Mojaddedi on the council's defying his requests and said efforts concerning cancellation of Mojaddedi's resignation in protest to negotiations by certain members of the council with Rabbani's government, have remained ineffective.

Government Planes Bomb Taleban in Chahar Asiab

LD0612132295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night government planes heavily bombarded the Taleban positions and concentrations on the heights around Chahar Asiab. Expressing this point, a source of the Afghan Defense Ministry claimed that during the bombardment at least 21 of the Taleban were killed and 35 others injured. According to the report a military training base in Chahar Asiab was hit as well. According to the report by the Central News Unit heavy weapons firing continued last night and this morning. No report has been received about the loss of life and damages caused by the heavy weapons fire.

Foreign Ministry on Taleban's Shelling of Kabul

LD0712114495 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Areas in the east and south of Kabul were hit by at least 35 Katyusha missiles and heavy weapons shells last night.

Announcing the news an Afghan Foreign Ministry spokesman attributed the attacks to the Taleban group. He told our correspondent: Those areas were unpopulated. For that reason no one was hurt in last night's attacks, but houses in the area were severely damaged.

Bangladesh

President Receives PRC Friendship Delegation

BK0612133295 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Abdur Rahman Biswas has said that Bangladesh enjoys close friendship and excellent bilateral relation with China. He said this during a meeting in Dhaka today with a high-level, six-member delegation of the Chinese People's Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries led by Qian Zhengying, vice chairperson of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Mirza Golam Hafiz, law and parliamentary affairs minister, was also present on the occasion.

The president expressed the hope that the friendly and close relationship will further stabilize and strengthen in the days to come. President Biswas said that China has made great contributions to Bangladesh's socioeconomic development. Like China, Bangladesh is also a people-oriented country, and the people of Bangladesh highly value the PRC.

Delegation leader Qian Zhengying said that their visit is aimed at strengthening the bilateral relations between the two countries. She lauded the socioeconomic progress in Bangladesh under the present government. She conveyed the Chinese president's sincere greetings to President Biswas. President Biswas responded with similar remarks.

Commissioner on Elections; Officers Appointed

BK0612021695 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 5 Dec 95

[All figures as heard]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Election Commission [EC] has appointed 66 returning officers [preceding two words in English] and 506 deputy returning officers to conduct the parliamentary elections next month. A total of 64 deputy commissioners have been appointed as returning officers for 298 constituencies. The regular Additional Divisional Commissioner [ADC] of Barisal has been appointed the returning officer for the Barisal-Pirojpur combined constituency, while the regular ADC of Dhaka has been appointed to the Mymensingh-Netrakona combined constituency. The 506 deputy returning officers include an additional district magistrate, a regular ADC, an ADC from the revenue department, 19 ADC's from the land department, 460 police station executive officers, 10 district election officers, and 32 police station area election officers.

Nomination papers may be obtained free of charge from the returning officers or deputy returning officers. According to the election schedule, the last date for filing nomination papers is 17 December. Nomination papers will be accepted by returning officers and deputy returning officers at their offices during working hours.

Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque has called upon the personnel of the administration and police assigned to the election duty to fulfill their responsibility with sincerity and courage while remaining totally impartial. He was addressing a meeting of divisional commissioners, deputy inspectors general of police, the Dhaka metropolitan police commissioner, district administrators, and police superintendents at MEC Hall in Dhaka today.

The chief election commissioner said that the commission is committed to holding the forthcoming parliamentary elections in a free, fair and impartial manner. He said that after the announcement of the election schedule, all personnel involved in the election duty are considered under the (?authority) of the EC. No personnel will be replaced without the EC's permission, he said. The meeting was attended by Election Commissioner Mohammad Abdul Jalil, Election Secretary Ershadul Haq, Home Secretary Syed Rezaul Hayat, and Police Inspector General A.S.M. Shahjahan.

Opposition Sets Conditions for Joining Election

BK0612154395 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina has said that the opposition will participate in the election if Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia resigns and if the president forms a caretaker government in accordance with his constitutional power. She was addressing a rally in Dhaka today organized by her party in commemoration of the fall of autocracy and the removal of the shackles from democracy. Sheikh Hasina again called upon Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to resign and help the president form a neutral caretaker government.

Armed Forces' Assistance Sought During Elections

BK0612163595 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The chief election commissioner has sought active cooperation from the senior officials of the armed forces to help the voters exercise their franchise and hold the coming general elections in a free, fair, and impartial manner. The cooperation was sought at a meeting of the senior officials of the Army, Navy, and Air Force in Dhaka today. The meeting discussed necessary measures to maintain congenial law and order during the election and especially to recover all illegal arms. It was attended, among others, by Election Commissioner Justice M.A. Jalil; chief of General Staff of Army, Major General Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman; chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam; and chief of Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal Jamaluddin Ahmed.

Defense Forces Agree To Protect Voters

BK0612113395 Hong Kong AFP in English 1102 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, Dec 6 (AFP) — Bangladesh's defence forces have agreed to provide special cover during the country's general elections next month, Election Commissioner justice A.K.M. Sadeque said Wednesday [6 December].

"I have told them they have to be prepared to ensure law and order during elections as they did during 1991," Sadeque told AFP after meeting army, navy and air force chiefs of staff.

The army would assist the civil administration in maintaining law and order during the polls, he said.

The military, which played a crucial role during the 1991 elections, ruled Bangladesh directly or indirectly between 1975 and 1990. Those who served during the 1991 polls were recently decorated by the government.

Sadeque, who is to set-up a "Law and Disciplinary Cell," has ordered district chiefs to seize illegal weapons and arrest "terrorists" on a police wanted list.

The opposition has threatened to disrupt the January 18 elections and there has already been sporadic violence in Dhaka and other cities during the campaign.

The opposition is demanding that elections are held under a neutral caretaker administration.

Meanwhile, newspapers reported that Prime Minister Khaleda Zia was expected to contest the maximum five constituencies permitted under the constitution. Her elder son Tareq Rahman, a businessman, was likely to try in the northern Bogra district, home of his slain father president Ziaur Rahman.

The opposition Jatiya Party of deposed president Hussain Muhammad Ershad has called for a nationwide communications blockade Thursday. It is also to join other parties in a march to Zia's office the same day. A three-day nationwide strike is to start Saturday.

Police Impose Restrictions on Dhaka Areas

BK0612162395 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Dhaka Metropolitan Police, in order to maintain peace and order in the city, has banned all kinds of rallies and agitation in some areas, beginning at 0800 tomorrow until 0800 on 8 December. During this period, the carrying of any firearms, swords, spears, guns, knives, clubs, explosives, stones, or projectiles has also been banned throughout the metropolitan area.

The areas where the ban has been imposed are: the Bangla Motor Link Road and Sonargaon Road crossing; the Pantha Path and Green Road crossing; Manik Mian Avenue and the Mirpur Road crossing; the area from the west of Tunnel Road in the parliament area to the Korotoa crossing; the Shayamali Sishu Mela crossing to the Agardaha crossing; the road in front of the Taltala gas station to the old airport area; the Dhaka army cantonment's Shahid Jahangir Toron to the Mahakhali crossing; the Nabidpur crossing to the Satrasta Mor, Rainbow crossing; and in front of the [word indistinct] to the Bangla Motor crossing and the streets and alleys in these areas.

India

U.S. Response to Minister Said 'Not Acceptable'

BK0612161095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India today conveyed to Washington that the U.S. Administration's response to the home minister's statement in the Rajya Sabha on Kashmir is undiplomatic and not acceptable. The American Charge D'Affaires in New Delhi was summoned by Secretary, West, Mr. Vinod Grover, to the Foreign Office and told that the use of undiplomatic language by the U.S. side is regrettable. An official spokesman said in New Delhi today the U.S. side was also told that, while there may be differences of opinion on issues between the countries, New Delhi does not accept such observations which are not in keeping with diplomatic practice.

U.S. Envoy Summoned Over Remarks

BK0712074295 Hong Kong AFP in English 0647 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI Dec 7 (AFP) — India has complained to the United States about the "undiplomatic language" used by a State Department official responding to an Indian minister's charges of US interference in Kashmir.

Vinod Grover, a senior external affairs ministry, summoned the US charge d'affaires here Wednesday to express India's displeasure over the comments by the US State Department official, newspapers said Thursday.

Grover told the US diplomat, who is filling in for ambassador Frank Wisner while the US envoy is in Washington, that the use of "undiplomatic language" was "regrettable and unacceptable," they said.

"We do not expect such observations which are not in keeping with diplomatic practice," the Indian official added.

The unidentified State Department official was quoted as saying in Indian press reports from Washington that Chavan's charges, made on Tuesday in the Indian parliament, were "utter nonsense."

"Mr. Chavan pops off like that once or month or so on his own. He is an embarrassment to his colleagues in the Indian government," the US official reportedly added.

Chavan accused the United States of harbouring "evil designs" on Kashmir, the northern state claimed by both India and Pakistan and wracked by a Muslim separatist conflict which has left more than 12,000 people dead since 1989.

He also accused Washington of backing Islamabad in stirring up trouble in the border state. Pakistan denies the charge saying it only extends moral and diplomatic support to a legitimate campaign for self-rule.

Commentary Assails U.S. 'Interference' in Kashmir

BK0712110095 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 7 Dec 95

[Commentary by INDIAN EXPRESS Senior Editor A.J. Philip: "U.S. Meddling in Jammu and Kashmir Affairs"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The union home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan's statement in the Rajya Sabha on the dubious role the United States has been playing in Jammu and Kashmir is a reflection of the sense of frustration India has been feeling over this issue. He merely stated the obvious when he said that the U.S. was not eying Kashmir in terms of Pro-Pakistan or anti-India, but wholly in terms of furthering its own global interest. The U.S. seems to be keen on gaining a foothold in the state because of its strategic situation. It sees the present situation of strife in the Kashmir valley as a godsend opportunity to fulfill its strategic ambition. Thus, whenever the situation shows some signs of improvement, the U.S. tries to upset it. All along, the U.S. has been keen on playing the role of a mediator, which will enable it to have a decisive say in what is purely an internal matter of the country.

Aware of the U.S. game plan, the Government of India has been resisting all such attempts. Of course, India is not averse to talks with Pakistan on settling the Kashmir dispute, but it has to be within the bilateral framework as stipulated in the Simla accord. Such a principled stance does not give scope for outside interference even as a mediator. This is what has been rankling the U.S. Unable to reconcile itself to play no role at all in Kashmir, the U.S. has been trying to pinprick India through statements, which are intended to hurt Indian sentiments. The culprits are not junior-level officials like the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Ms. Robin Raphel, who once questioned the instrument of accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India alone. The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton's clubbing of Kashmir with Bosnia in his UN General Assembly address some time back, his talk of human rights abuses in the state while welcoming a new Pakistani ambassador to the U.S., and his letter in reply to a Khalistani extremist fall in the same category. Coupled with this are the frequent trips of U.S. officials to Srinagar. All this has raised suspicion about the U.S. motive.

The response Mr. Chavan's statement evoked in Parliament is a measure of the concern the people of India have over the U.S. posture. While a denial of the charges made by Mr. Chavan was the predictable response from the U.S. Administration, it was quite unbecoming of it to allow a junior official to describe the home minister's statement as complete nonsense. But, then, it reflects the haughtiness with which the U.S. has been treating India. All the same, the U.S. can play a role in restoring peace and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. It is aware of the sinister role Pakistan has been playing in the state by aiding and abetting terrorism. But for the patronage that the militants get from across the border, terrorism in the state would have died out long ago. This is known to the U.S., which, at one time, even toyed with the idea of declaring Pakistan a terrorist state. If it backtracked on this, it is not because of Pakistan's change of heart, but because of its hesitation to act against an ally. If at all there was any doubt about the pro-Pakistan stance of the United States Administration, it was removed when it recently passed the Hank Brown Amendment under which Pakistan would shortly get sophisticated weapons worth $1 billion. It is this kind of support that encourages Pakistan to wage a proxy war against India. Once the U.S. withdraws its support to Pakistan, India will be able to take care of the rest. Mr. Chavan's statement should, in fact, induce the U.S. to act in a more responsible manner.

Security Steps Taken To Counter Rally in Ayodhya

BK0612021495 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Uttar Pradesh governor says that the status quo will be maintained in Ayodhya, in accordance with the Supreme Court decision. Talking to our correspondent in Lucknow today, Mr. Motilal Vora said that all arrangements have been made to maintain peace and harmony in the state. According to state home secretary, elaborate security arrangements have been made in and around Ayodhya in the wake of a call given by various organizations to reach the city tomorrow. A general alert has been sounded throughout the state. Additional paramilitary forces have been made available to the Faizabad district administration. Patrolling and picketing in the sensitive areas have been intensified. Police force has been deployed on all the entry points to the Ayodhya city.

Situation 'Peaceful'; 350 Arrested

BK0612133095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Leaders of various political parties in the Lok Sabha have asked the government to refer all the cases pertaining to the Ayodhya [temple-mosque] dispute to the Supreme Court under the provisions of the Constitution. Raising the issue, the CPI-

M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] leader, Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, described 6 December [when the mosque in Ayodhya was demolished] as a day of national mourning and called for introspection and rededication to protect the secular ethos of the country.

In Uttar Pradesh, the situation in Ayodhya is reported to be peaceful. About 200 devotees offered prayers at the makeshift temple of Ram Lalla [Lord Rama] till noon. As reported, security arrangements have been tightened in the wake of a call given by some organizations to reach the city today. Our Lucknow correspondent reports that 350 persons, including the president of the Progressive Democratic Party, Mr. Abdul Nasir Madani, have been arrested on the apprehension of breach of peace.

On the Ayodhya issue in the Rajya Sabha, the Janata Dal, left parties, and the Indian Union Muslim League members staged a walkout after they failed to raise it as soon as the house assembled for the day. The deputy chairperson, Dr. Najma Heptulla, ruled that nothing will be allowed to be raised during the question hour. She asked the members to raise it at an appropriate time.

President Concerned Over 'Transborder Terrorism'

BK0712090395 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president today said that transborder terrorism supported by those involved in drug trafficking and sponsored by a neighboring country is a major cause of concern to India. Speaking to a visiting delegation of the European Parliament led by (Mr. Philippe Monfel), Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma said India welcomes all steps to curb the menace of terrorism. While appreciating the support of the European Union to the reform process in the country, Dr. Sharma expressed concern at artificial barriers being erected in some developed countries against India.

The delegation also met the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan. In his discussions, Mr. Chavan expressed India's determination to hold elections in Jammu and Kashmir despite Pakistan trying to foil it through foreign mercenaries.

Mukherjee Stresses Growing Trade Ties With U.S.

BK0712090795 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] (Mr. Paul Groves), chairman of the U.S.- India Joint Business Council, along with his delegation members met the external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, in New Delhi today. In the course of the deliberations, Mr. Mukherjee highlighted the multifaceted relationship between India and the U.S.. Mr. Mukherjee explained the nuances of our reform programs and stressed on the irreversibility of the reform process. The minister stressed on the growing bilateral trade relationship between the two countries. He emphasized that USA had accounted for 40 percent of the total foreign investments since the reform program began in 1991.

(Mr. Groves) said this was the largest delegation comprising 69 delegates representing 60 corporations to visit India in 18 years since its inception.

Import Rate Slows; Exports To Keep Growth Level

BK0512033395 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 4 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India's imports, which for the first seven months of this year rose by 30 percent, have slowed down and the economists say that exports are likely to stay above the 25 percent growth level.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] India's import bill for the first seven months of this fiscal [year] has risen by 30 percent over the same period last year. Exports also grew by about 25 percent but that could not stop the trade deficit from doubling. Significantly, however, growth in nonoil imports was higher than that of oil imports. This implies that industrial imports were more, which in turn would lead to a higher industrial output and exports; and economists say any fall in this is not desirable.

[G.D. Kalra, senior economist at the National Council of Applied Economic Research] In case of the raw materials and inputs for our industrial production, there it is not going to slow down, because they are dependent upon the raw materials.

[Correspondent] The surge in imports was mainly due to a bunching of orders during the middle of this year. As a result, the trade deficit during July shot up to $704 million, but ever since the monthly trade gap has been narrowing. It fell to $450 million in August; slipped further to $404 million the following month; and in October it came down to $234 million. Analysts attribute this to a slowdown in imports following the rupee depreciation and congestion at the ports in recent months.

[P.L. Sanjeev Reddy, the director general of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade] Logistical problems like port congestions, clearance delays, these are the types. Obviously, they have accounted for this. Besides, there are some (?outliers), namely the sugar import which took place last year but did not take place this year; and actually the POL [petroleum, oil and lubricants] side also there appears to be some decline in the value in that particular field.

[Correspondent] While imports have slowed down, exports are expected to stay above the 25 percent growth level. This may only marginally impact on the overall trade deficit, but the current account deficit is unlikely to exceed the projected figure of 1.5 percent of the GDP [gross domestic product]. [end recording]

Navy To Increase Goodwill Visits To Boost Sales

BK0512113795 Delhi THE ASIAN AGE in English
1 Dec 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Swaraj Thapa]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Nov 30 — The ministry of external affairs [MEA] has asked the Indian Navy to increase its goodwill visits to foreign ports in a bid to market Indian warships.

The ministry wants the navy to sail more especially to countries in West Asia and Southeast Asia, where there is a growing market for the half-a-dozen indigenously-built warships. Senior naval officers said the proposal to send the navy on goodwill missions abroad was first mooted by naval headquarters some months ago.

The potential for selling Indian ships to developing countries has prompted the MEA to give the go-ahead to the navy, sources in the navy said.

The officers said the navy had put up the proposal after a few recent trips to Southeast Asian countries revealed a potential market for Indian warships.

According to a senior naval officer, Indian naval ships visited nearly 20 countries in the last 10 months, including China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Japan and Israel. Among these countries, the Philippines showed the most interest in Indian-made ships, according to the sources. Last week, one submarine and two ships, including the Indian-built INS [Indian Naval Ship] Kuthar, also visited the Gulf on a goodwill mission, as part of the government's marketing strategy.

The Philippines had shown considerable interest in the Project 25 class of ships, a middle-level warship with a carrying capacity of about 90 men. A report was subsequently submitted to the defence ministry, advising a follow-up. A Filipino delegation is expected in Delhi soon for further talks, the sources said. INS Khanjar, one of the indigenous ships of the Project 25 class, was part of the fleet that went to the Philippines. The goodwill missions are mostly to developing countries looking for warships at costs lower than world prices, the sources said, adding: "Compared to a similar class of ships which could be procured from other countries, ours work out to be much cheaper without compromising on technology."

The chief of the naval staff, Admiral V.S. Shekhawat, pointed out at a recent press conference that the defence industry in the country was developing at a fast rate. "Warship building is one of the areas where we can compete internationally," he said. Significantly, although the navy was facing a squeeze on its budget this year, half of it was spent on designing and building new ships.

The Navy is also ready to start building submarines, based on the German HDW design, in the Mazagaon docks. However, while the government has agreed to the navy's proposal, it has not yet issued a letter of intent to the dockyard. But the navy is optimistic that the letter of intent will be given in the next six months.

Launch, Operation of INSAT-2C Detailed

BK0712065895 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 0245 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The country's second generation multipurpose communication satellite, INSAT [Indian National Satellite]-2C, has been successfully put into geosynchronous transfer orbit by an Ariane rocket early this morning. The satellite was put into the transfer orbit after 26 minutes of blast off from Kourou in French Guiana at 0453 hours.

The chairman of the ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization], Dr. Kasturirangan, said that the Master Control Facility at Hassan in Karnataka which is to control the satellite operations after the launch has already received signals from the satellite. It is is in perfect health.

Our special correspondent, Sheshachandrika, reports from ISRO headquarters that the 2,050-kg second generation INSAT-2C satellite is designed and built by the Indian space scientists. It will enhance the INSAT space segment capacity of the country. The INSAT- 2C will be co-located with the earlier INSAT-2B satellite at 93.5 degrees East. The satellite when positioned in the geostationary slot — 36,000 kilometers above the earth — will help in improved telecommunications, wider television coverage, and introduction of mobile satellite services. The satellite will be powered by a 23 square meter solar array containing six solar panels that will generate 1,620 watts of power. Armed with 24 powerful transponders, the INSAT-2C has helped ISRO to cross several landmarks. Our correspondent adds that the next two or three weeks are most crucial for the Indian space scientists who will be engaged in various complex maneuvers of shifting the satellite from the transfer orbit to the geostationary orbit. Our correspondent, Sheshachandrika, reports from INSAT headquarters on the latest details available about the satellite:

[Begin Sheshachandrika recording] The INSAT Master Control Facility center at Hassan in Karnataka picked up the first signals of the satellite within 28 minutes of the lift-off of the launch vehicle at 0423 hours earlier today. The Master Control Facility center which has drawn the attention of the entire scientific world is now monitoring and controlling the satellite. As of now, the systems that are being switched on are functioning normally and the health of the satellite is in perfect condition. In the coming days the orbit of the satellite at the highest stage final geostationary orbit. [sentence as heard] Its solar panels and antenna will be deployed and after testing of all the systems on board INSAT-2C, it will be put to operation within the first week of the New Year. [end recording]

Iran

'Illogical' Criticisms of Human Rights Assailed

LD0612132995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Station commentary; as heard throughout]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Now that a new representative has been appointed to the UN Human Rights Commission, grounds have been paved for a boost in cooperation between Iran and the commission. One of Iran's officials at the UN, Mr. Mahdi Danesh-Yazdi, announcing this in New York said: Iran tries to have close cooperation with the newly appointed representative.

The UN's Third General Assembly Committee, in its regular annual session, is to study the cultural, social and human rights situation in different countries. The outcome of the studies, according to the UN's special envoy, will be released in the framework of the resolution. The resolution which is the direct outcome of the current trend is generally drawn up based on the viewpoints and interests of its initiators, namely, the United States and the EU [European Union].

According to the Iranian ambassador at the UN, his meetings with several EU members have shed light on the fact that those [who have] drawn up the resolution — despite their claims of neutrality and realism — are still intent on taking advantage of the issue of human rights as a ploy against Iran.

Incoming reports from New York indicate that the initiator of the UN's third annual General Assembly, presented a controversial draft to the assembly which was borne out of the EU's unilateral and biased attitude toward the Islamic Republic of Iran. The draft accused Iran of charges, none of which appearing in the special envoy's annual report. Raising worn-out issues in a draft points out to the ill-faith of those behind the resolution. And it seems that the architects of the irrational resolution are attempting to turn the EU General Assembly third committee into a political lever in order to exert further pressure on independent states.

Despite all these heinous acts and the West's illogical inferences from the human rights situation in Iran which is based on divine teachings, the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches greater importance to the issue of human rights and lofty moral values as compared to other countries in the world.

The West should finally give in to the fact that it is not in a position to deprive any independent society of its unique aspirations and ideals. Only through constructive cooperation along with good faith and not by resorting to hostile encounters, could mutual understanding be reached on the issue of human rights or other matters.

Iran has, on various occasions, assured the world of its goodwill and honesty in this regard.

Afghans Said Losing Hope of Islamic Government

NC0712083895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 7 Dec 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] While political efforts to resolve the Afghan crisis continue, many of Afghanistan's political groups have expressed the hope that the war and bloodshed will end. News agencies report that representatives of parties and groups, members of the Afghan Supreme Coordination Council, are meeting to reach a common view on developments and that this has speeded up political efforts to resolve the crisis.

The meetings, which are being held in Peshawar in Pakistan and in Mazar-e Sharif, Balkh Province, in northern Afghanistan, are being attended by representatives of Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], the Northern Movement led by General Dostam, and other members of this coalition. The Mazar-e Sharif session examined the adoption of basic positions at this sensitive time and participants called for coordination in the talks with Borhanoddin Rabbani's government.

These efforts are taking place at a time when the recent defeat by the Taleban group in southeast Kabul has placed doubts in front of the Supreme Coordination Council's cooperation with the group, and when the members of the council are not very interested in cooperating with the Taleban group. Some members of the Supreme Coordination Council have emphasized that decisions should not be made separately in the political talks with the government; some members of the coalition tried to hold separate talks with Rabbani, thereby creating a rift in the council.

These differences in the Supreme Coordination Council started in early Mehr [late September], after the fall of Herat in Shahrivar [month ending 22 September] and the rapid strengthening of the Taleban forces. The question that arose among the Afghan groups was: If Kabul falls, how will they confront the Talebans' indisputable power? Thus, the idea of separate talks with Rabbani strengthened among some of the opposition members of the Coordination Council.

Despite heavy casualties in attacks on Kabul during the past three weeks, the Rabbani government is in a better position to reach an understanding with the opposition members of the Coordination Council. The only message that the continuation of any kind of war and differences in Afghanistan conveys is that a power struggle in Afghanistan is being repeated and is also making the people lose hope that an Islamic and independent government will be formed in the country.

IAEO Officials on Building Nuclear Power Plants

LD0612202295 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1650 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Dear viewers, as you know part of the world's energy requirements are today supplied by nuclear power stations. We have invited two experts of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization [IAEO] to discuss this issue and the planned contribution of nuclear power to our country's energy requirements. They are Mr. Dust-Mohammadi, a university lecturer in nuclear physics and technical affairs deputy of the IAEO; and Mr. 'Ali Dusti, also a lecturer in electric energy and nuclear power. [passage omitted]

Mr. Dust-Mohammadi, some time ago it was said in the news that the Chinese are about to sign some agreements with Iran for nuclear power stations. Could you please explain this point and could you also tell us basically how many nuclear power stations are planned to join the national power grid?

[Dust-Mohammadi] We were supposed to sign an agreement with the Chinese for two 300 megawatt units. This agreement was signed and its location was supposed to be Darkhovin. However, due to some later problems, the site of these two proposed power stations was changed from Darkhovin to Bushehr. The reason for choosing Bushehr is its potential and plenty of water resources. This issue has delayed the implementation phase of the agreement. We hope these problems will be solved soon because the Chinese are very eager to complete these two power stations. They have built a similar power station in their own country and another power station of this type is currently under construction in (Cheshmeh), Pakistan. Of course the one they built for themselves is now operational.

Concerning the general plans of our organization for building power stations, I must say that in addition to completing the first unit and two 440 megawatt units — which have been discussed with the Russians — and the two units that the Chinese are going to build, there is a plan to start a second unit too. [sentence as heard]

[Announcer] Do you mean the second unit has not started yet?

[Dust-Mohammadi] No, the second unit has not started yet. The plan is drawn and is being kept until we complete the first unit.

[Announcer] Am I right in concluding that the first unit is the one which at the present is being completed by the Russians?

[Dust-Mohammadi] Yes, that is right.

[Announcer] Fine. Dear viewers, you have become familiar with the mechanism of power stations and how they work. [passage omitted]

Majles Official on Christian-Muslim Dialogue

LD2911121195 Tehran IRNA in Persian 0858 GMT 29 Nov 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Vienna, 29 Nov [IRNA] — Majles deputy Raja'i-Khorasani announced on Tuesday [28 November], at the end of a conference held in Switzerland on "dialogue between Christianity and Islam," that Europe is in the process of revising its approach toward Islam.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with IRNA's correspondent, he added that, toward this end, numerous conferences are being held in various European countries by Christian theological centers in order to improve their understanding of Islam.

He said that the fact that a conference on dialogue between Christianity and Islam had been held in Switzerland was a positive step toward this aim. The conference was held this week after a similar conference in London. It was supposed to have been held at the same time as the conference on dialogue between Islam and Christianity in Bonn, the capital of Germany, which was postponed.

Khorasani said: The German Bundestag has shown a strong reaction to the remarks made by Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the president, and 'Ali Akbar Velayati, the foreign minister, in response to the killing of Yitzhaq Rabin, the prime minister of the Zionist regime. He added: despite this, Klaus Kinkel, the German foreign minister did not agree to the request from the German Bundestag to cancel Velayati's trip to attend the conference on dialogue between Islam and Christianity.

Khorasani added: Kinkel postponed the conference because holding the conference without the participation of Iran was meaningless. Raja'i-Khorasani said this showed how much importance the west attaches to the Islamic Republic's role in this regard.

The conference on dialogue between Christianity and Islam was held in Switzerland by the "Swiss Development Academy" from Saturday to Monday this week [Iranian week starting on Saturday] in the town of Biel. [passage omitted]

On Monday, which coincided exactly with the 900th anniversary of the start of the crusade wars of Christians against Muslims, the participants issued a communique under the title "peace communique" between Islam and Christianity. In the communique, regret was expressed on the part of Christians over the occurrence of the Crusades and apologies have been extended to Muslims, Jews and all those who suffered as a result of these wars. [passage omitted]

Khorasani said that one of the other points in the communique, stressing that freedom of expression should not be misused in relation to Islam and Christianity, was also very important. [passage omitted]

In the communique issued by the conference in Switzerland on dialogue between Christianity and Islam, it was noted in reference to the crusades that, although hundreds of years have passed since the end of these wars, no peace accord has yet been signed between Muslims and Christians. In view of this, the participants in the conference decided to view their communique as a peace agreement between Muslims and Christians.

Khamene'i Urges Development of Country

LD0412150395

[FBIS Editorial Report] Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian at 0648 GMT on 4 December broadcasts live a 48-minute speech by Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic Revolution, in Qom at the city's holy shrine.

Khamene'i begins by speaking of the importance of Qom to the revolution in Iran. He also speaks of the importance of the city to the Shiite tradition. He goes on to say that because of its particular importance, the eyes of friends and foes throughout the world are on Qom. He says that the arrogant powers dislike all independence-seeking revolutions, but they dislike the Islamic revolution in Iran in particular because it is based on faith in God. The arrogant powers were able to buy off other revolutions with "jeep-fulls of petrodollars", he says, but they could not buy off or intimidate the Islamic revolution in Iran. Khamene'i adds that believers in Islam are always the winners in any battle, no matter whether they live or die.

Khamene'i then turns to the need to develop the Islamic Republic of Iran. He says the people of Iran must strive to build and develop the country, despite the efforts of the country's enemies because success for Iran means success for Islam.

Khamene'i says: "It is a reality that Islamic Iran must be developed. Many plans must be drawn up and a great deal of effort must be expended and a great deal of struggle [mojahedat] must be undertaken. The struggle will be in the path of God. Today, anyone who strives to develop Islamic Iran is struggling in the path of God, because when Iran is built and developed, when the livelihood of the people, their education, their health, the various aspects of their lives develop to a good position, it will serve as a model for Islamic administration. It will show that when Islam wants to run a country, it does so in this way.

"You should know, my dear ones, this is precisely why the enemy does not want Islamic Iran to develop. They create obstacles to the construction of Iran. Of course, these obstacles have no effect. God be praised, the country's officials, with your assistance — it is with the support of you dear, faithful, and courageous people that government officials obtain the hope and enthusiasm to work hard; and this hard work must continue. Everyone must help. The future lies in building this country.

"I must definitely raise one point here. Let no one think that building Islamic Iran — which, God be praised, is being built today by the country's, the government's, officials — let no one think that the construction of Iran is incompatible with steadfastness before and resistance to the enemy. No, this is not at all the case. Let no one make such a mistake. Some people think that constructing Iran means that, since we want to build, we must allow our enemies to gain mastery over this nation by any means and by any path they wish. God forbid. The steadfastness of this nation is the spirit which inspires any action. This nation has proved that it will stand up to the enemy in the battlefield, in the field of revolution, in the field of politics, and in the field of construction. It will work hard because it is not afraid of the power of the United States, of the awesomeness of a superpower, of anyone." At this point the congregation chants in support of Khamene'i's remarks.

He goes on to say: "This has been the spirit of resistance of this nation until today and it will continue in the same way. The thing which I deem to be necessary for you dear faithful and intelligent people is for you to continue the same clear and true path that you have been following until now. The enemy's propaganda broadcasts, its wickedness, its policies must not cause the slightest trepidation in the hearts and lives of the men and women of this nation. Everyone must work with full strength, with full hope in the future, and with total unity. In exactly the same way as today when, God be praised, the nation is united, a solid nation, a nation with one voice and one heart.

"This kind of unity is rarely seen in the world. We are not aware of this kind of coordination in a nation anywhere else; as well as unity and coordination between every single individual and the country's officials, with the executive branch, with the judicial branch, with the legislative branch; support for those people who are working for the nation and presence in all fields — and there is a variety of fields. And, at the appropriate time, we will also say something about elections. God be praised, the people have been present in all the arenas and you must maintain this presence."

Khamene'i concludes his address by promising development for the Qom region and hinting that Qom region may be promoted to the rank of an administrative province, with its capital being the city of Qom itself. This idea is received enthusiastically by the audience.

Khamene'i Stresses 'Heavy Responsibility' of Ulema

LD0612141595 Tehran IRNA in English
1351 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Holy Qom, Dec. 6, IRNA — Leader of Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, underlined here Wednesday [6 December] the need for ulema and theology students to become more familiar with the current issues and political affairs.

Ayatollah Khamene'i, who was addressing a group of theology students from Iran and abroad on the occasion of the auspicious birthday anniversary of the commander of the faithful, Imam 'Ali Bin-Abi Talib (peace upon him), called on the audience to acquire more knowledge. After placing turbans on the heads of fresh theology graduates, he drew attention to the duties of the ulema in society, and said that to adorn the traditional robes means to accept a heavy responsibility.

Today the 13th of the month of Rajab is the birth anniversary of the cousin, son-in-law and successor of the prophet, Imam 'Ali, who was born in the holy ka'ba in Mecca in the year 30 Aam al-Fil (600 A.D.). The life of the commander of the faithful, who was martyred some 63 years later in the mosque of al-Kufah, in Iraq, while in communion with his creator, offers the finest example of the values held dear by the human race. He personified faith, virtue, knowledge, wisdom, ascetism, justice and chivalry, and his rule of justice has been the cherished goal of every truly Islamic society.

Official Addresses Formation of Political Parties

NC0612161795 Tehran RESALAT in Persian
21 Nov 95 pp 1, 2

[From the News Desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] We formed various associations in order to attain divine objectives, therefore the means cannot be considered the end itself.

This was stated yesterday by Asadollah Badamchian, the executive secretary of the Islamic Coalition Association and head of the committee on Article 10 on political parties. He was answering questions by students at the Tehran University mosque and added:

According to Ayatollah Javadi-Amoli, Islam is itself a formation. When we state we are Muslims, it means we are part of an organization and we have come together under the auspices of Islam.

Badamchian, who was addressing a student gathering on the invitation of the Islamic Students Association of the Tehran University's medical faculty, continued: Organizations assume shape spontaneously and evolve in accordance with the requirements of the environment and society.

Speaking on the operation of various parties at various times, Badamchian said: The Feda'iyan-e Eslam party was a covert one and after 28 Mordad [19 August] it succumbed to the exigencies of time and stepped aside. However the Nehzat-e Azadi [Freedom Movement] was an overt organization and the regime was fully informed of its activities. Therefore, it did not have any problems in its sphere of operations which did not include any armed activities.

He continued: The Islamic Coalition Association was a different kind of organization and was covert as well. In addition to the effective political operations it also had an armed branch and was ready to indulge in all kinds of selflessness for Islam.

Referring to the fact that prior to the victory of the revolution as well as in its aftermath we had parties in Iran, Badamchian elaborated: In the Constitution, we have incorporated the issue of the freedom for the formation of political parties. Our laws are some of the most progressive and best laws in the world, as normally in other countries parties are controlled by interior ministries.

On the subject of the rejection of the qualifications of the Nehzat-e Azadi by the committee for Article 10 on political parties, Badamchian stated: The Nehzat-e Azadi's license for political activity was revoked by the committee for Article 10 and this was done on the basis of the laws and regulations.

Answering a question on the Militant Clerics Society, Badamchian said: The Militant Clerics Society had obtained the license to operate from the committee on Article 10 and used to operate as a party earlier. However, now its activities are practically non- existent. They have announced that they will nominate a candidate in the fifth Majles elections. [as published]

In response to another query on the Militant Clergy Association, Badamchian replied: His eminence Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani believes that the Association is not a party and on principle its structure differs from that what is considered a political faction in common parlance and therefore it cannot be considered as such.

In another part of his remarks, he said: Iran is moving in the direction of political parties, groups, and formations and probably nearer the time of the elections or perhaps after them we might witness the emergence of a party that would be a conglomeration of these groups. If the activities of parties were carried out within the accepted framework of the system and were to respect the people's sentiments, it would not pose any problem.

He answered another question saying: We do not have a right or left faction and this is a Western term. We should use the will of the imam (may God be pleased with him) and the guidance of our great leader [Khamene'i] as our model and the tenets of Islam as the basis. This is because we are all Muslims and believe in the imam and the Velayat-e Faqih [rule by the supreme jurisconsult].

In reply to yet another question Badamchian said: The Constitution has delegated the authority to vet the qualifications of the nominees for the Majles to the Guardians' Council, the members of which had been appointed by the imam, the great leader, the Majles, and the Judiciary.

According to the law, this Council does not have the right to announce the reasons for the rejection of a nominee's qualifications but they inform the nominee who is permitted to announce them to others.

Health Minister Confirms 118 AIDS Cases

LD0212102595 Tehran IRNA in Persian
0920 GMT 2 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tehran, 2 Dec — The minister of health, treatment, and medical training has announced that, so far, 311 people have been infected with the aids virus (HIV), from which 118 people have developed full-blown AIDS.

Dr 'Ali Reza Marandi, who was speaking on Saturday [2 December] at a seminar in Tehran Medical University on World AIDS Day, added: From the 118 aids sufferers, 107 are men and the rest women, and 100 have died so far.

He said that 175 people caught the virus from infected blood and blood products, 7 (who were drug addicts) from using dirty needles, and 106 from sexual contact with infected people. The reason for the infection of 19 people remains unknown.

The health minister underscored the need to observe piety and morality, to marry at a suitable time, and the need for family planning. He called on doctors, paramedics, and the clergy to inform the people about matters. [passage omitted]

Provincial Projects, Regional Development Organizations

96LA0026A Tehran RESALAT in Persian
8, 10 Aug 95

[Article by Hoseyn Abrandabadi]

[8 Aug p 1]

[FBIS Translated Text] **Part One**

The government developmental budget, which is implemented in the form of developmental plans, is divided into two main branches of national developmental plans and provincial development plans. The developmental plans also are divided into a number of developmental projects.

Before the Islamic revolution, the developmental budget was implemented on the whole in the form of a series of "programs," which were under the "chapters" of developmental funds, and only a part of the developmental budget was used for regional development. From the early 1360s [1980's], developmental plans were divided into two parts: national and provincial. From that time on, the budgets for these two groups have been determined separately.

In the national plans, the developmental activities have a national dimension, even though they are implemented in the geographical domain of a province, but in the provincial plan, according to the definition, the following characteristics exist.

1. With the implementation of a provincial plan, the benefits of the created capacity is only for that region or province.
2. There is no need for consulting engineers on a vast scale.
3. It reaches operation in one or two years.
4. Funds for its implementation are carried out in the volume of limited funds.

More than a decade of implementing provincial developmental projects in the country has increased regional development and provided fundamental and welfare resources for the provinces, but at the same time, provincial projects in the country have faced problems and the continuation of the trend of the creation of resources and increase in the benefits for the provinces of the country depends on eliminating the existing problems and then making the necessary decisions. Here we discuss some of the problems of the provincial projects:

1. Despite the limitation of the financial and physical resources of the country, the number of provincial developmental projects underway in the country during 1368-1372 [21 March 1989-20 March 1994] years has been increasing. Chart 1 shows this trend.

Chart 1. Number of Projects Under Way in the Country From 1368-1372

Year	1368 [21 March 1989-20 March 1990]	1369 [21 March 1990-20 March 1991]	1370 [21 March 1991-20 March 1992]	1371 [21 March 1992-20 March 1993]	1372 [21 March 1993-20 March 1994]
Number of Projects	34,275	35,877	42,048	42,653	45,818

Source: Plan and Budget Organization, Deputy Office of Technical Affairs, Office of Supervision and Evaluation, 1372, SUPERVISORY REPORT ON PROVINCIAL DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS, Aban 1372, p. 69

As can clearly be seen in Chart No. 1, the number of provincial developmental projects increased from 34,275 in 1368 to 45,818 projects in 1372.

At first glance, it may seem that with the increase of projects underway, they will bring economic and social development for the provinces, but an examination of the facts about those projects creates doubt in the conclusion.

The fact is that due to the limitation of the financial and physical resources of the country, the start of a large number of projects every year has caused the number of incomplete projects to increase every year, so that at the present one of the problems of developmental projects in the country is the existence of the mass of incomplete and late projects.[1]

The significant volume of incomplete projects which are transferred to the following year and in the course of time face inflation in expenditures increases the burden of the developmental funds of the province and makes questionable the economic justification of the project.[2]

Another problem that has been created as a result is that every year the provincial developmental projects are transferred to the following year. For example, of the total projects underway in 1371, 26,767 projects, equivalent to 66.27 percent, were transferred from 1371 to 1372.[3]

On the other hand, at the end of 1372, of the total of 45,818 projects under way, 19,415 projects (42.37 percent) reached operation.

Also, on the basis of projections in the agreements of the developmental plans of the province, out of 45,818 projects underway, 33,170 should have been temporarily put into operation by the end of 1372, but in practice only 19,415 projects, that is, 58.53 percent of the projections, were achieved.[4]

Another problem of the developmental projects of the provinces is the increasing trend of provincial developmental funds coming from the general government resources, because due to the relative shortage of allocated funds to each province vis-a-vis the increasing number of provincial projects, the ratified figures are always much lower than the actual figures. One of the consequences of this has been the lengthening of the period of implementation of the project, so that in some cases the lengthening of the implementation of the project makes it not economically feasible.[5]

Of course, in some cases, the allocated funds have been absorbed, but due to the problems of the physical progress of the projects have not been as expected. For example, the weighted average of the progress of projects in 1372 has been calculated at 76.48 percent, whereas 93.13 percent of allocated funds were absorbed.

Studies made by the Plan and Budget Organization show that aside from the two general problems mentioned, the provincial projects have numerous minor problems. Chart 2 shows the problems of the provincial developmental projects in 1372.

Chart 2. Implemental Problems and Shortages of the Developmental Projects of the Provincial Executive Organizations in 1372 (Unit: Number of Projects)

Executive Organization	Delay in Procurement of Land	Implemental Plans Not Ready	Weakness of Consultant	Weakness of Implemental Organization	Weakness of Contractor	Shortage of Materials	Shortage of Machinery and Equipment	Shortage of Installation Equipment	Delay in Exchange of Agreements
Offices of Governors General	2	11		23	10	1	27	4	5
Education	5			30				1	24
New Construction and Equipping of Schools	149	12	3	148	276	11			20
Physical Education	10	4		63	13	3		1	1
Health and Treatment	20	10	1	120	132		2	2	34
Departments of Agriculture	8	12	3	55	15	40	26	79	11
Roads and Transport	2	2		33	47	74	134		6
Housing and Urban Development	13	5		17	34	2			
Construction Jihad	11	63	37	128	35	73	118	32	96
Housing Foundation	1	4	16	36	10	1	5		1
Total	221	123	58	653	572	205	312	119	198

Source: Plan and Budget Organization, 1372 SUPERVISORY REPORT ON PROVINCIAL PROJECTS, p. 71

Notes

1. National Administrative and Employment Affairs Organization, "Examination of Implemental Problems of Developmental Plans in Government Organizations," Azar 1370 [22 November-21 December 1991].
2. Plan and Budget Organization, deputy for technical affairs, Office of Supervision and Evaluation, "Super-

visory Report of Provincial Developmental Projects in 1372," Aban 1373 [23 October-21 November 1994], p. 70.
3. Ibid., p. 70.
4. Ibid., p. 71.
5. Research Center of the Majles, "Marketing of Developmental Projects in the First Plan," 1373 [21 March 1994-20 March 1995].

[10 Aug p 11]

[FBIS Translated Text]

Final Part

Some suggestions made by the executive organizations to eliminate the problems and shortcomings of developmental projects are as follows:[1]

1. on time notification of the provinces regarding developmental funds in the lines and notes;
2. essential changes in the implemental and technical system and strengthening the technical capability of the executive organization;
3. use of qualified and rated contractors in implemental work;
4. encouraging and persuading the specialized private sector to participate in contractual work;
5. prevention of the expansion of direct government work by the executive organizations to support the policy of contracting the implementation of developmental projects;
6. making the technical capability of the executive organizations suitable to the volume of funds;
7. constant supervision and follow up by the executive organization and other institutions responsible for the implementation of projects.

One of the methods with which almost all the above-mentioned problems can be countered and a large number of the above-mentioned suggestions by the executive organizations can be automatically covered is the creation of a "regional developmental organization."

Such organizations play an essential role in many countries of the world for the financial security of the developmental projects of the region, and in our country, as well, two examples of such organizations have been created and are active.[2]

On the other hand, with the creation of this organization, by using the people's capital, the provincial developmental projects can be implemented and remove the burden from the shoulders of the government. This method that is used in other countries as well is able to have local and regional projects that benefit the public or even are a source of revenues and stop the government from engaging in small projects. The most important benefits of the creation of regional developmental organizations for the provinces of the country are as follows:

1. Reducing the financial burden of the general government budget. With the implementation of a large portion of the developmental projects of the province through these funds and financial procurement of the needed funds from the people, the domain of the developmental activities of the government decrease, and as a result the financial burden of the general government budget will be reduced.

2. Decentralization in the investment activities. Excessive centralization of investments in the country in the hands of the government and following the process of decision making and securing finances of very small projects have itself been among the hindering factors in public participation. The creation of regional developmental funds will be a factor in decentralization.

3. More participation by the people in construction. Since the provincial projects benefit the people of that region, it is easily and rapidly financed by the people, and they see the results clearly. For this reason, a clear horizon is created for increased participation of the people in the construction of the country.

4. Directing cash flow in the society toward production and reducing the inflationary pressures. The high volume of cash flow in the private sector and lack of investment opportunities are tangibly among the factors sending the cash flow towards speculative and destructive activities, also among the important factors in eliminating inflation. The creation of regional developmental funds can send a part of the existing cash flow at the provincial levels toward developmental projects and decrease the pressures of monetary inflation.

5. Movement toward regional development. Central planning for the implementation of developmental projects has the problem that attention to regional projects is insignificant. Every region has unique potential in terms of agriculture, industry, commerce, or service activities. Regional development with the use of the potential of each reason will direct employment and investment in that region toward potential capabilities. For this reason, the creation of regional developmental funds is itself good news, encouraging more attention to regional development.

6. Present problems and shortages of the provincial projects, such as delays in the procurement of land, implemental plans not being ready, weaknesses in the executive organization, weaknesses in the contractor, and delays in the exchange of agreements are mainly due to

the problems of the executive organizations and the administrative system of the country. In fact, the completion of developmental activities by the executive organizations results in the spreading of administrative and executive system problems to the investment and production activities. The creation of the above-mentioned funds, due to their nongovernmental nature, can automatically eliminate the above-mentioned problems and increase the efficiency of the implementation of the developmental projects.

It should be explained that in most countries in which the regional developmental organizations are responsible for financing the developmental projects, by creating an institution, they engage in marketing shares and by making use of a strong and competent board of directors make maximum effort to decrease expenditures, complete the project on time, and make it profitable.

Hence, the legal structure and the organizational form of such establishments can be formed as general shares. The initial part of the shares can be secured by large companies and actual persons who have financial capability in every province. Even the financial resources in excess of the production and developmental capability of each province can be sent to the neighboring provinces. Hence, the creation of a regional balance is also one of the positive consequences of the creation of such a regional developmental organization.

As it was explained in the text of the article, numerous problems of the developmental projects of the province make it necessary to create a regional developmental organization. It is hoped that the creation of such an establishment in each province will be a solution for further development of the regions of the country and help reduce the problems of the provincial projects.

Notes

1. Majles Center for Research, "Marketing of Developmental Projects in the First Plan," 1373 [21 March 1994-20 March 1995].
2. West Regional Developmental Investment Company and Sistan and Baluchestan Developmental Organization.

Census Statistics for Households Reported

96LA0051B Tehran RESALAT in Persian 9 Sep 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] **Economic Affairs Division—The Statistical Center of Iran published the journal of the results of the census statistics on household social and economic characteristics for 1373 [21 March 1994-20 March 1995].**

The Public Relations Office of the Statistical Center of Iran made this announcement and stated: The examination of the results of the census statistics of the household social and economic characteristics in 1373 shows that the 3,982 sample households in the country had a population of 121,126 people. Of this population, 10,879 were males and 10,307 were females, which gives a gender ratio of 105. [sentence as published]

The population distribution in the major age groups indicates that 40.9 percent of the above-mentioned population are in the age group of under 15 years of age, 54.4 percent in the 15-64 age group, and 4.7 percent in the 65 and over age group.

This report continues: In 1373, among the sample households, 83.7 percent owned their own residence, and 4.1 percent were renters. Also, the average annual income per household for the whole country was 5.4 million rials [R], and the average annual expenditure per household was R5.1 million, of which R1.8 million (35 percent) was spent on food and tobacco and R3.3 million (65 percent) on non-food expenditures.

Sistan, Baluchestan Development Projects

96LA0051C Tehran RESALAT in Persian 9 Sep 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] **Zahedan, RESALAT correspondent—Considering the emphasis of the grand leader and the initiatives of the honorable president regarding the elimination of deprivation in the deprived regions, the government is determined to implement hundreds of developmental, cultural, economic, and fundamental projects to reduce the gap of underdevelopment in Sistan and Baluchestan, and to implement these projects, there shall be no limitation on funds.**

Mirzadeh, the deputy to the president and head of the Plan and Budget Organization, who visited the region in order to examine the developmental projects under way in Sistan and Baluchestan, made this announcement in an interview with our correspondent and added: This year, 270 billion rials [R] in provincial and national funds has been allocated to the implementation of developmental projects in this region. Moreover, in order to complete the vital projects underway, including providing drinking water for Zahedan, Iranshahr, Chabahar, and other areas as well as the drainage project of the lands of Dasht-e Sistan and the sewage of Zabol, needed funds will be allocated. Regarding the creation of jobs and making up for the cultural, economic, and social privation of the province, he said: To invest in this region, with the help of the banking system, industrial investments in the province will take shape.

Starting this year, the necessary funds will be provided so that by strengthening the Sistan Development Organization, we will be able to complete the vital projects which started some time ago.

Dissident's Disappearance in Baku Noted

964F0417A Baku ZERKALO in Russian 17 Nov 95 No 43, pp 1-2

[Article by I. Umudlu: "Iranian Political Emigrant Missing in Baku: Opposition Organization Accuses Iranian Special Services of Kidnapping One of Its Former Leaders"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The ZERKALO editorial office has received an appeal from the Central Council of the Organization of the Iranian People's Fedayin (Majority) which states: "On 27 September 1995 in the city of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, the secret police of the Iranian regime kidnapped 'Ali Tavassoli, a former member of the Central Council of the Organization of the Iranian People's Fedayin (Majority). He had come to Baku from England the day before on trade matters and, according to a previously established plan, was kidnapped by agents of the secret service of Iran. Until 1989 'Ali Tavassoli was a member of the Central Council; however, this year he has not engaged in any kind of political activity. The Central Council of the Organization of the Iranian People's Fedayin (Majority) is calling on all political forces and freedom-loving people of Iran, and also on international human rights organizations, to help save the life of 'Ali Tavassoli, who is in the hands of torturers of the Islamic regime."

It has become known from Iranian emigrant sources in Baku that 'Ali Tavassoli is by birth a Khorasan Turk, born in Mashad. He received a higher education in Tehran, and in the 1970's joined the active struggle against the shah's regime. He was imprisoned (incidentally, together with some current leaders of Iran, and even became friends with them) and subjected to torture. As the supervisor of the organizational department, he was the second person in the aforementioned organization. After the defeat of the left-wing organizations and parties in 1983 he moved to Uzbekistan, where by that time the fedayin who had moved to the Soviet Union had gathered; however, by the beginning of the 1990's, like many political emigrants from Iran, he had familiarized himself more closely with Soviet reality, and headed further to the West. 'Ali settled in London, where he lived in recent years with his family. It was also learned that he had trade ties with some Iranian firms that worked in Baku. He arrived in our capital at the invitation of the director of the Kaveh Ltd firm of Hamid Karimi-Far, who was one of his companions and who conducted trade with Iran through the mediation of his father.

According to information from Iranian emigrant sources, Hamid Karimi-Far, the son of a large Tebriz merchant, also belonged to the aforementioned fedayin organization, and since 1983 had lived in Baku as a political emigrant and managed his own firm. It is said that in recent times he traveled frequently to his motherland and has his own private residence in Tebriz. Many mention his contacts with the Iranian Embassy in Baku. It is said that the people who kidnapped 'Ali Tavassoli also came to Baku officially at the invitation of the same Hamid Karimi-Far 15 days before this event.

After arriving in Baku, the first thing 'Ali Tavassoli did was meet with Amiral Lakhrudi, leader of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party. This party was founded in Tebriz by Seyyed Ja'far Pishavari himself. The headquarters has been located in Northern Azerbaijan since the defeat of the democratic movement in Southern Azerbaijan in 1946.

"A trap was set for him," claims Lakhrudi. "They lured him to Baku with a deception, where indeed he fell into the hands of Iran's secret police. 'Ali is one of the prominent figures of the fedayin. Nothing is known of his fate to this day. This action is a constituent element of the policy of threats and pressure on Iranian political emigrants. Hamid Karimi-Far played the main role in his seizure. This reminds me of the role of the traitor 'Abbas Shahriyari. Apparently, the Iranian special services came to the conclusion that Tavassoli says that he has simply left politics, but that actually the firm where he was a companion belongs to the fedayin. Therefore, their bank account in Tehran was sequestered ahead of time."

"'Ali went directly from the airport to our headquarters," continued the leader of the South Azerbaijan democrats. "He wanted to learn my opinion of these people who insisted on his arrival allegedly to resolve the problem of a closed bank account in Tehran. He told me that his comrades in London had advised him not to travel to Baku and not to meet with these crafty people. However, he came. I also advised him not to meet with these people, and in an extreme case only in the hotel and discuss any questions there. For unknown reasons 'Ali went to the meeting alone...."

According to certain information, the day after the disappearance of 'Ali Tavassoli, Hamid Karimi-Far also disappeared. And within three or four days his wife departed for Iran. A cafe is now operating, to be sure, with infrequent visitors, in the basement premises where the firm of Hamid Karimi-Far was previously located.

A person who asked that his name not be mentioned, who knew 'Ali Tavassoli and Hamid Karimi-Far very well, said that 'Ali might have disappeared forever, and that he will not be found. 'Ali Tavassoli's mysterious story is not an isolated incident. Another political emigrant from Southern Azerbaijan recounted how unknown persons kidnapped him in broad daylight; however, right in the doorway of the Iranian Embassy he was able miraculously to break away from these people, about which, incidentally, there were reports in the newspapers. There are also other cases of organized persecution of political emigrants who live in Baku.

Where can 'Ali Tavassoli be held? Is he being held here in Baku in some hiding place, where he is being interrogated in order to obtain necessary information? Or has he already been killed? A month and a half have already passed, but there is no news of him. Iranian political emigration circles think it most likely that he has already been moved to Iran.

By the way, since the disappearance of 'Ali Tavassoli, many Iranian emigrants who acquired political asylum have stopped considering themselves safe.

Although 'Ali has been out of politics since 1989, as the former director of the organizational department of a once powerful organization, he would know very much about the OFIN [Organization of the Iranian People's Fedayin] and about trends inside this organization. It is clear why 'Ali Tavassoli, the person, had important significance.

Amiral Lakhrudi, leader of the ADP [Azerbaijan Democratic Party], recounted the following about the history of the Organization of the Iranian People's Fedayin:

"The Organization of the Iranian People's Fedayin was founded in the deep underground in the 1960's. In the main its members were young people from the student environment. Ethnic Turks constituted the overwhelming majority of OFIN ranks. As a left-wing organization, it always had an illegal status. It fought for national self-determination of the people of Iran on the model of the USSR, India, Switzerland, etc. It allowed the method of armed struggle against the shah's regime.

"Their first armed offensive occurred in February of 1970 in the Mazandaran forests in the small town of Lakhidzhan. However, the fedayin suffered great losses in the clash with regular troops. After this they moved the battlefield to the quarters of large cities. They began to operate in small groups. The operations of these 'teams' of three persons spread considerable panic in all big cities. In Tehran they killed General Farsio, chairman of the military court, and many highly placed officers.

"The largest offensive of the fedayin occurred in the town of Dowshan Tappeh: They attacked a military airfield; however, after two days of fighting they were defeated. During the course of the anti-shah struggle many OFIN members were killed, and they went through the entire nightmare of Savak torture chambers. In 1975 after perceptible losses the organization gave up armed struggle, adopted Marxism, and on this basis even declared a desire to unite with the Iranian People's Party (Tudeh). However, Tudeh did not consider unification feasible.

"With time a split occurred in the OFIN. The majority came out for peaceful struggle, but a minority retained an extremely radical position with respect to first the shah's regime and then the Islamic regime as well. A third fedayin group under the leadership of Ashraf Deghani (who is from Tebriz and now lives abroad) conducted a long struggle against the regime.

"The former leader of the OFIN (Majority), Farrokh Nigyakhdar [name as transliterated], lives in London. The headquarters of the organization is in Bonn. All the former leaders submitted their resignations at a congress held in 1989. At this time the administration of the organization is conducted by a Central Council consisting of 15 persons. Political work is being carried out mainly among emigrants from Iran who live in the West at the present time. According to some reports, work has been initiated inside Iran itself."

PAYAM-E EMRUZ on Majles Before Recess

96LA0019A Tehran PAYAM-E EMRUZ in Persian Aug-Sep 95 pp 79-80

[FBIS Translated Text] **The Majles held six open sessions in Tir [22 June-22 July] and three in Mordad [23 July-22 August], then it went on summer vacation. At the same time, the commotion regarding the Fifth Majles elections had begun, and the present deputies were trying to end the term with good memories keeping half an eye on the elections. The fiery pre-agenda speeches and requests for inquiry and investigation of ministries and government and semi-government institutions could be among the results of the approaching elections. In the interval between the summer vacation, which continues until 12 Shahrivar [3 September], the Majles administration has found an opportunity to do some renovations of the building that was built 30 years ago for the Senate. Changing the decorations and renovating the cars of the deputies were among the discussions of the last sessions of the Majles.**

The parliamentarians began the Tir sessions with attacks on Engineer Mahluji, the minister of mines and metals, for his speech in the meeting of the directors of the Ministry of Mines and Metals. Musavi the deputy from Ahvaz had become angry because in that meeting, the minister of mines and metals had spoken about the interpellators in the Majles and the Article 90 Committee and considered it an insult to the Majles. The Public Relations Office of the Ministry of Mines and Metals later sent a communique and ended the commotion.

The second session passed with the most exciting domestic issue of the country in recent months; that is, the embezzlement of the Saderat Bank. The commotion about it also started for the first time in the Majles. Mahmud Astaneh, who for the first time by discussing the subject of this embezzlement in the Majles revealed the issue and dragged it into the pages of the newspapers, in the next phase did not consider the response of the minister of economic affairs and finance satisfactory. Finally the report of the Investigation Committee was read in the Majles, which for the first time indicated the arrests and names of those accused. This event occurred a few days prior to the work of the court examining the embezzlement in the Saderat Bank. In this session, another report was also discussed, and that concerned the question of the majority faction to the minister of Islamic guidance regarding the permit for the publication of HAMSHAHRI newspaper. During the time that it was posed, the deputy who asked the question did not consider the response of Mostafa Mirsalim satisfactory. It was examined in the committee, and the opinion was given that the opinion of the minister of guidance was correct and that in the publication of HAMSHAHRI nothing illegal occurred because the law prohibiting the city halls from publishing journals was ratified after HAMSHAHRI began its publication. This was not the only militant exploit of the majority faction that opposes the Tehran City Hall, and in every situation they voice their opposition. Among dozens of requests for inquiry and investigation, the most controversial concerned the Tehran City Hall. While the deputies who oppose the Tehran mayor had their eyes on this inquiry and investigation, 76 deputies in the final session of the Majles prior to the summer vacation protested this request and asked that it be withdrawn from the agenda.

Among other boisterous activities of the deputies was a discussion of the proposal to change the election law. The minority faction was not optimistic from the beginning of the discussion, and in several articles that were published in SALAM, it was hinted that the other faction intends to make its domination over the Fifth Majles decisive. The main purpose of these changes is to legalize the extensive authority of the Council of Guardians over the elections and approval or rejection of the competence of the applicants. The minority faction particularly referred to one of the proposed articles in the new election law intended to prevent those who had not passed through the sieve of the Council of Guardians in the past elections forever from entry into the Majles. It was pointed out that in the past term, the omission of the names of some of the well-known candidates of the minority faction created a great commotion, which is still the subject of protest by those individuals. This opinion did not turn out to be correct, and when this article of the changes in the law was discussed, several people in the majority faction opposed it; it did not receive a vote. The increase in the authority of the Council of Guardians became decisive until the issue created a problem in another article. Among the qualifications of candidates, the deputies included the condition of having a bachelor's degree or its equivalent in seminary education, which was a new condition. Movahhedi-Savoji suggested that candidates should be tested for their ability to recite the Koran, and considering the requirement of religious education, the speaker of the Majles protested: Could anyone study in the religious seminary and not know how to read the Koran? This suggestion was rejected. When the law went to the Council of Guardians, that council regarded the "condition of having a bachelor's degree" contrary to the Constitution, which puts a condition for everyone in the country. The amendment of the Council of Guardians returned to the Majles, the deputies did not agree to omit it, and as a result, this part of the ratified law went to the Council for the Discernment of Expediency to find a solution.

Another important issue that was discussed in the second session in Mordad without any prelude was a proposal by a number of deputies to establish a Supreme Court to protect the Constitution. Based on this proposal, anyone, whether an ordinary person or an official of the executive or judicial organization, who violates the Constitution must prepare himself for six months to four years in jail. The suggested proposal states that the Supreme Court for the Protection of the Constitution will be chosen from one chairman and two advisors, who are appointed if the grand leader does not object. Among the newspapers, only SALAM commented about this proposal and wrote that lack of an authority to issue a ruling about those who violate the Constitution is clear.

In some countries in the world, including Russia, such a court exists with great power and usually investigates complaints against the president, the speaker of the Majles, the prime minister, or ministers.

Some of the issues discussed in the open session of the Majles sometimes continue and for days are discussed in the pages of the newspapers. Raja'i-Khorasani, the deputy from Tehran from the majority faction, is one of those who has so far created such a climate with his statements. Among them, in Tir, following the president's interview with CNN, because several morning and afternoon newspapers had criticized the president and objected to this interview for various reasons, in his pre-agenda speech Raja'i-Khorasani strongly attacked the opponents of this interview and accused them of not knowing international balances and the secrets of making use of diplomatic language and the use of the world media. This statement once again raised the cries of the newspapers addressed, and in harsher articles they attacked Raja'i-Khorasani. These include KEYHAN, JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI, and SALAM. These attacks raise Raja'i-Khorasani's past regarding his writing a letter about the necessity of establishing relations with the United States, and one of the newspapers even referred to the case that states that during Raja'i-Khorasani's final days in New York (as Iran's UN ambassador), he was accused of putting on a raincoat without paying for it in a department store.

The last development occurred in the last session of the Majles, when 147 Majles deputies (more than the members of the majority faction) in a letter to the speaker of the Majles protested the issuance of several recent circular letters by the Central Bank. The Central Bank claimed that the objections of the Majles deputies relate to legal implementations ratified by them, and if they intend to solve the issue known as "the differences," they must provide the Central Bank with legal permission.

The Majles deputies went on summer vacation from 6 Mordad [28 July] while, based on the decision of the Board of Directors and despite the protests of Dr. Sheybani against decorating, buying carpeting, and making other repairs, workers were ready for work to renovate the Majles during the summer vacation.

Inquiry and investigation is one of those legal tools that has not been used as necessary in the four sessions of the legislature after the revolution. The closer the Fourth Majles gets to the end of its term, the more enthusiasm it displays. The most controversial inquiry in this term of the Majles concerned radio and television, which occurred last year and ended in the direct conflict between the Majles and the Voice and Vision. In the meantime, the Voice and Vision questioned some of the Inquiry Committee members of the Majles, and the dismissal of Mohammad Hashemi after 11 years as the director of the Voice and Vision was an event that, in any case, was recognized as a side effect of the inquiry and investigation in the political circles. In the months that passed, seven requests for inquiry and investigation have been made, among which those concerning the Foundation for the Oppressed, the City Hall, and the Central Bank were the most important.

Regarding the City Hall, Mohsen Kuhkan, who had requested the inquiry and investigation, referred to numerous components about the City Hall and, regarding the reason for his request, referred to the chaos in the financial accounts of the City Hall and the report of the Auditing Organization that stated that due to the confusion in the financial accounts of the City Hall, the 1372 [21 March 1993-20 March 1994] accounts could not be managed.

Kuhkan believed that the checks of those who were paid by the City Hall in some banks do not add up to the 140 billion rials [R] in the accounts recorded in the City Hall, but no reference is made to this issue in the text of the inquiry and investigation.

In the last session prior to the Majles vacation, 76 deputies saw the inquiry and investigation of the City Hall as contrary to the internal bylaws of the Majles and asked for its withdrawal. Their reasoning concerned the overall incomprehensibility of the issues in the inquiry and investigation. This group pointed out that in other instances (question and interpellation), the speaker of the Majles has rejected the suggestion of the deputies for this reason.

The inquiry and investigation regarding the Central Bank and other banks in the country will be one of the most extensive and involved of these cases. The fact that the inquiry and investigation regarding the Foundation for the Oppressed was also carried out rapidly and with the desired cooperation, and the report by the group was more positive than ever seen in any other case, was interpreted in the political circles to be because of the close ties of the director of the foundation with the majority faction in the Majles and the cooperation between the two.

Late in Tir, on the day that the inquiry and investigation of the Ministry of Agriculture regarding the transfer of national resource lands was discussed, the speaker of the Majles found the opportunity to explain that inquiry and investigation does not in any way mean the weakness or weakening of organizations, but will strengthen them. He regarded these actions as strengthening the regime and said: "The Majles does not play favoritism with anyone. It will deal with violation no matter where it is, including the Judicial Branch, the Executive Branch, and the Majles itself."

Among the other measures by the parliamentarians to oversee the actions of the Executive Branch was the suggestion of a proposal to establish the Oversight and Examination Committee over the implementation of the laws, which was not ratified.

Sabzevar Deputy's Comments at 19 Sep Majles Viewed

96LA0038A Tehran SALAM in Persian 21 Sep 95 p 4

[Article by Purtaher: "Notes on Deputy From Sabzevar's Speech"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the report we received on the Tuesday [19 September] Majles session, Dr. Rah-Chamani, deputy from Sabzevar, gave a pre-agenda speech in which he mentioned the election atmosphere and emphasized that this atmosphere must be prepared in such a way that all the nation's various ethnic and political groups will be able to participate actively in the elections and present their candidates. He said: It is not right and proper for the atmosphere of the nation's elections to be such that some officials of a political and religious organization endorsed by the late imam and the exalted leader, such as the Tehran Militant Clerics Society [Majma'e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez] announce that in the elections for the Fifth Majles the Militant Clerics Society does not plan to have a candidate. He advised those working in the elections that they should so organize the atmosphere of the elections that there can be active participation by all the political groups, including the Tehran Militant Clerics Society.

The fact that in his speech the deputy from Sabzevar spoke plainly about the existence on an unsound atmosphere in the elections for the Fifth Majles and that some officials from the Tehran Militant Clerics Society announced that they do not intend to present a candidate for the elections (of course this must be officially confirmed by the society's officials) is an indication of what has been taking place openly and behind the scenes in the last few months in the nation's political affairs.

These events include Majles approval of the Motion to Amend the Elections Law, emphasize determinative supervision by the Guardian Council, and, consequently, a reduced role for the executive councils and an increase in the power of the supervision councils to confirm or reject the competence of candidates. They also include the numerous dismissals and appointments in the last few months in the Ministry of the Interior; the election of one of the most active members of the right-wing faction as one of the legal specialists on the Guardian Council; the reports being relayed in political circles that the Guardian Council has announced to its supervision councils in the provinces that they should reject the competence of individuals whose competence was rejected in previous elections without examining their files if they become candidates again, and other things. All of these things have contributed and are contributing to the belief that what happened in the elections for the Fourth Majles will be repeated.

Purtaher—Majles correspondent

SALAM Article Views 5 Sep Majles Session

96LA0024B Tehran SALAM in Persian 6 Sep 95 p 4

[Article by Purtaher: "What News From the Majles?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In yesterday's session, the suggestion to postpone the proposal to combine the Ministry of Cooperatives into the Ministry of Commerce for a period of six months was ratified by the majority of the deputies.

This proposal that was presented to the Majles several months ago by the right-wing faction deputies, was referred to the committee, and if it were to be examined routinely by the Majles, it would most likely not have been discussed in the open session for several months. It seems, however, that the support of the national officials, particularly the honorable president, for the cooperative sector in the past few days resulted in the suggestion for postponement of this proposal to be presented and ratified rapidly.

The interesting point in yesterday's session was that Mr. Bahonar, the deputy from Tehran (who is one of the signatories of the proposal), spoke to explain the suggestion to postpone it. In his speech, he said: I find it unlikely that any of the signatories by offering this proposal have intended to reduce the importance of the cooperative sector. He left the discussion about this proposal to the Fifth Majles.

In opposition to the postponement, Mr. Movahhedi-Savoji, also the deputy from Tehran, said: Unfortunately, contrary to what we see nowadays, the honorable officials support the cooperatives and the cooperative sector enthusiastically, but both the honorable government and the Majles deputies have a history of trying to chop the Ministry of Cooperatives to pieces. In conclusion, he said: Postponing the proposal will not solve any problems.

In any case, it seems that, as Mr. Bahonar also predicted, this proposal will be examined in the Fifth Majles. The deputies of the Fourth Majles, too, following the support in the past few days for the cooperative sector, ratified this suggestion, so that at this juncture they would not appear to oppose the government in the public mind.

In his speech yesterday, Mr. Majidi, the deputy from Fasa, protested the purchase of 1 million mobile telephones by the Ministry of Post, Telegraph, and Telephone and said: The purchase of 1 million mobile telephones, financing a large figure, and creating obligations are contrary to Paragraph M of Note 22 of the Second Plan law. He added: Based on what larger perspective, which research and study, and what strategic study are the conclusions and decisions reached that 1 million mobile telephones should be imported, when we have the largest electronics industry, advanced digital communication industry, and long-distance communication industries complex in Shiraz?

In his speech yesterday, Mr. Movahhedi-Savoji regarded inquiry and investigation of the Tehran City Hall not to be problematic and a necessary matter and said: Some have raised the objection that because inquiry and investigation of the City Hall is a general issue, it cannot be discussed in the Majles, whereas in the past, in accordance with the bylaws of the Majles, this action was done regarding the operation of other organizations, and the Majles ratified it and no one objected to it. He added: Those who support the Tehran City Hall should know that the Majles and most of the deputies have ratified this inquiry and investigation, and this does not mean that they oppose the Tehran City Hall.

It is interesting that about a month ago, 74 deputies in a letter to the speaker of the Majles stated that inquiry and investigation of the [Tehran] City Hall cannot be discussed because it is contrary to the internal bylaws, it is general, and the instances are ambiguous. In connection with this letter, the speaker and the Board of Directors of the Majles have not yet provided any explanation.

Pakistan

Bhutto: 'No Threat' to Democratic Institutions

BK0712092095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has made it clear that there is no threat to democratic institutions of the country and the elected representatives should not be influenced by any propaganda. She assured the PDF [People's Democratic Front] MLA's [Members of Legislative Assembly] who called on her in Islamabad that there would be no change in the existing democratic set up. The prime minister said some opposition members were trying to give highly misleading impression that the present session of the National Assembly would be the last one during the present government. This, she added, will not only be insult to democracy but an attempt to dislodge a popularly elected government.

The parliamentary secretary for science and technology, Sardar Talib Hussain, who called on the prime minister later told APP that what was being said by the opposition leader, Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, was his wishful thinking. He said there was no political or economic crisis in the country.

Ministers Comment on Brown Amendment, Karachi

BK0712093495 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The National Assembly was informed today that adoption of Brown Amendment is a vindication of Pakistan's principled position on a broad spectrum of areas of cooperation between Pakistan and the United States. Answering a question by Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, the parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs, George Clement, said that the passage of the amendment by a convincing majority shows the bipartisan support enjoyed by Pakistan against the unfair Pressler law. He said Brown amendment allows economic assistance as well as return of military equipment, transfer of technology, and insurance cover to American businessmen for investments in Pakistan. It would remove a major irritant in Pakistan-U.S. relations and would go a long way in mutual desire of both Pakistan and the United States to revitalize their relationship.

The interior minister, retired Major General Nasirullah Khan Babar, informed the house that four persons have been arrested out of 24 who were involved in killing of 15 persons in Karachi. Replying to a number of supplementaries, he said the government inherited a situation in Karachi. The minister said from July onward the measures taken by government have been achieving positive results and it will take time to eliminate terrorists from the city. He informed that out of about 1,500 terrorists, some 600 have been apprehended and about 100 have been killed in encounters. The interior minister said he had given a deadline of 31 December to improve the law and order. He said Javed Langra [a Muhajir Qaumi Movement activist] recently visited Bangladesh to recruit terrorists from Bihari camps.

Commander Reports Airports on 'High Alert'

BK0712095695 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 7 Dec 95 p 10

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi — Brigadier Rashid A Malik, Force Commander of Airports Security Force (ASF), Wednesday [6 December] underlined the need for special security, saying that all airports in Pakistan are on a high alert and the airlines should fully cooperate with ASF for plugging any loopholes.

In a 75-minute meeting with the country managers of all airports and head of agencies working at the airport at the ASF Headquarters, Brig Rashid Malik said the government taken special precautionary measures after blast in the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad. "All the airports in Pakistan are on high alert", he emphasized. The ASF Force Commander said: Security is the top priority matter and stressed that there will be no compromise on security matters in any manner.

Afghan Envoy To Move 'Camp' to Jalalabad Consulate

BK0612112395 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 6 Dec 95 p 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Pakistan's Ambassador to Afghanistan Qazi Humayun together with a dozen staff members is on his way to Jalalabad to set up a camp at Pakistan's Consulate there.

This is the fourth time that Islamabad resorted to moving its mission to Jalalabad from Kabul under adverse circumstances. Qazi Humayun barely escaped an attempt on his life a few months ago when follows of President Rabbani attacked the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul razing it to the ground. One staff member was brutally killed in the attack.

Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali demanded a public apology and compensation of the Kabul regime reopening its mission in its capital. President Rabbani has refused to do this.

A senior official at the Foreign Office commenting on the return of Pakistan's Ambassador said, "Jalalabad is very important for us. Unlike here we cannot move into Herat or other provinces. Jalalabad is also very important as it is one place where all the political parties, both in the government and the opposition, have their members of Shoora here. Thus we get an oppornity to keep in touch. Again we are close to Peshawar. Even the UN has an important office in Peshawar."

At present, Shaffullah Sharwani is Islamabad's Consular General at Jalalabad and maintains a small staff.

Asked how the Foreign Office saw the situation inside Afghanistan, particularly the liliban's ongoing struggle against the Rabbani regime, an Afghan expert said, "Kabul is very well defended and with the first snowfall there we see the govt [government] well entrenched."

Minister: Plan To Buy Russian Aircraft Dropped

BK0612113595 Karachi DAWN in English 6 Dec 95 pp 1, 18

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec 4 — Defence Ministere Aftab Shahban Mirani on Monday [4 December] justified the government's interest in purchasing the French built Mirage aircraft, both for technical reasons and for the want of other viable options.

Quashing accusations that these planes were being given preference for pay-off, he explained to the House that presently "Mirage was only being evaluated".

Going into details to select suitable aircraft for the country, he said: "it's true that Ukraine and some other states may be willing to sell the advanced Russian built MiG-25 aircraft but at the same time the Russians have told us bluntly that they would not sell us the spares for these planes. So that option is out, at least for the time being".

He went on to shoot down other options by claiming that another Swedish built fighter could not be considered seriously because "almost 35 per cent of its parts are American built and thus forbidden to us under the Pressler Amendment".

In a similar explanation regarding the rejection of the submarines offered by the British he said that the British had been trying to sell off these submarines for the last few years but did not find any buyers because the production facilities for this particular type had been scrapped by the manufacturers themselves. He further told that the British submarines too had used a fair amount of American built equipment, once again barred to Pakistan under the Pressler Amendment.

He said that the three submarines purchased by the Navy could be delivered before the stipulated date of year 2006, with the first one being delivered as early as 1998.

Mr. Aftab Shahban Mirani assured the House that "nobody was pocketing any commissions in any defence deals as hey were all government to government agreements".

Referring to a number of "commission" charges leveled by Gohar Ayub in an earlier speech, the minister insisted upon the "honesty" of the defence procurements and said that "there was no question of commissions from any source to anyone".

Rejecting the minister's claims however, Gohar Ayub once again accused the top decision makers of "pocketing commissions" and counter claimed that the Chinese had offered to equip their submarines with whatever equipment required by the Pakistan Navy but in the end they lost out because they did not know the art of paying commissions to those who mattered".

In a sarcastic tone he went on to add "When you need the help of friends in war or crisis you run to the Chinese but when it comes to giving out of contracts they go elsewhere, and we all know why". He said that the Mirage aircraft was totally unsuitable for "our regional defense needs" and advised the government to at least wait till the outcome of the impending elections in Russia because "the expected change in the government there could also mean a change in their policy vis a vis Pakistan and selling of MiGs".

Earlier the laying of five new presidential ordinances before the House stirred a bitter verbal clash between the treasury and the opposition.

The ordinances, coming at the heels of ten ordinances promulgated on Sunday, provided the much needed ammunition to the opposition which had also agitated over the ordinances issue only a day earlier. Gohar Ayub castigated the government for relying on "governance through ordinances" rather than "increasing the number of days of sitting of the parliament and clear the backlog of legislation".

Minister Comments on India, Kashmir Solution

BK0712042195 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, has said India must accept international assistance to advance the prospects of a peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and it should not refuse to entertain a third party mediation.

Commenting on the reported statement of the Indian external affairs minister before the lower house of the Indian Parliament in New Delhi, the Pakistan foreign minister said India should know that it cannot impose a military solution of the Kashmir dispute. He reminded India of several instances in which disputes were settled by international mechanisms such as Rann of Kutch and the Indus water distribution.

The foreign minister said Pakistan wanted a meaningful dialogue on the Kashmir dispute because this was the only way to reduce tension in the South Asia. He said India have been publicly making commitments for holding bilateral negotiations but have been avoiding to commit itself to meaningful talks and instead intensifying its military action in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. At the same time, India had been giving threats to Pakistan while professing peace which shows duplicity of India's intentions.

Minister: 'Nothing New' in Altaf Group Letter

BK0712091395 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The federal minister for law and parliamentary affairs, Professor N.D. Khan, has said he has received a 13-page letter from the Altaf Group side about the Karachi situation and said there is nothing new in it and all the old demands have been repeated.

In a statement in Islamabad yesterday, he said the Altaf Group should first clarify their position about the latest statement of Altaf Hussain in which he had threatened to change geography of Pakistan. Professor N.D. Khan said the talks remained unconditional from the very beginning and he was making efforts to resume these talks as soon as possible for an early settlement of the Karachi situation.

Daily: MQM Position, Altaf's Remarks 'Ominous'

BK0712113095 Islamabad THE NATION in English 7 Dec 95 p 6

[Editorial: "MQM's New Tendency"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] leader Altaf Hussain has issued what can only be considered a veiled threat that if people's rights are taken away from them consistently over a period of time, the very soil begins to demand those just rights and if these are still not forthcoming, the geography of a state can change. The implication of this statement is that if Altaf Hussain and the MQM remain dissatisfied, the situation can escalate to a point where the solidarity and sovereignty of the state is threatened.

The example of Bangladesh that he chose to illustrate his thesis seemed to indicate that what Altaf Hussain had in mind was the breaking away of part of the country, in this case Karachi. For some time now, the MQM and its spokesmen seem to have been testing the waters of public opinion by issuing statements which barely conceal their hidden meaning. It is of course for Altaf Hussain and his party to assess whether the ideas they are flirting with are in the interests of the country or even the interests of their Muhajir constituency. As far as public opinion generally in Pakistan is concerned these are clearly unacceptable concepts. The analogy with Bangladesh does not stand scrutiny because the two situations are hardly comparable.

While Altaf Hussain has based his thesis on widespread state terrorism which he says is being practiced on his followers and Muhajirs generally, and while all such instances of extrajudicial torture or killings are condemnable since they negate the very concept of law the state is supposed to be defending, the fact remains that this is not the only form of terrorism which is being practiced in Karachi. The daily reports of uninvolved innocent people being killed, especially the gruesome details of bodies bearing horrendous torture marks in gunny bags which keep turning up like nightmares, point to another form of terrorism by those opposed to the state's actions in Karachi. No state worth the name can ignore such heinous crimes, especially within the context of a mini- insurgency in Pakistan's commercial hub. The shoe also seems to fit on the other foot.

The MQM has suspended the talks with the government on finding a peaceful solution to Karachi's troubles since September. Their chief negotiator, Ajmal Dehlvi, who has just returned from a meeting with his leader Altaf Hussain in London, hs set forth certain terms for restarting the stalled talks. He claims the government has yet to fulfill certain commitments made during the talks. Until, he says, those commitments are fulfilled, the talks cannot be restarted. The fact is that MQM broke off the talks not because of this reason but because they said two of their workers had been killed by the law enforcement agencies and therefore there was no point in continuing the negotiations. The shift in pre-conditions for restarting the talks is not untypical of MQM's negotiating tactics. What has the MQM committed in return? Will it help to bring an end to violence? This is not to justify in any way the government's perceived non-seriousness in finding a political solution through the talks. Both sides bear some responsibility for the present impasse. But the tone of Altaf Hussain's latest words, as those of Ajmal Dehlvi when he justified the use of armed struggle to wrest rights in a democracy, seem ominous indeed.

Atomic Commission To Open Lahore, Karachi Offices

BK0612161395 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] After conducting a detailed review of safety analysis of the nuclear power plants, the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission has decided to establish two radiation protect inspectorates at Lahore and Karachi and additional regional inspectorates at Kundian, Quetta, and Peshawar. [sentence as heard] The annual report of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission says Pakistan Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection Regulations for registration and licensing of radio active material and radiation equipment are being implemented.

Bank Official Stresses Curtailing Monetary Expansion

BK0412061395 Islamabad THE NATION in English 4 Dec 95 p 14

[Editorial: "SBP Governor Explains"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dr Muhammad Yaqub, State Bank Governor, has stressed the importance of curtailing monetary expansion as a policy measure designed to combat inflation. He admitted that the short-run effect of devaluation and adjustment of oil prices, measures contained within the October 28 mini-budget, would fuel inflation but insisted that if credit growth was strictly monitored then chances are that inflation could be controlled. In effect Dr Yaqub seems to subscribe to the monetarist school of thought whereby monetary expansion, in itself, can be used to rectify any unwelcome fluctuations in major macro-economic indicators. Although Dr Yaqub did take up the issue of low government revenue and high expenditure and the need to balance the budget, a policy thrust more in line with the neo-Keynesian approach, yet he was of the opinion that it is credit reduction which can eventually reduce inflationary pressures. This approach has one major drawback in a developing country like Pakistan: no government can actually reduce credit expansion because it is intricately linked to industrial growth. Any reduction in credit would, therefore, lower borrowings by production units which, in turn, would reduce output, increase unemployment and, via the multiplier effect, reduce GDP as a multiple of the reduction in credit. Thus the government is unable to reduce credit in total terms and can only adjust the rate of rise in credit.

Interestingly, however, Dr Yaqub endorsed the opinion of the Cabinet, including one repeatedly expressed by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Mr Jaffery, special advisor to the prime minister on finance, regarding the state of the economy. He denied the bouncing of cheques, the freezing of foreign currency accounts or the sealing of private lockers. But such rumours are the product of a market that is jittery after the refusal by the IMF to reactivate the ESAF [Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility] and the government's continued denial about the real state of the economy. Dr Yaqub also maintained that the country's foreign exchange reserves were 1.2 billion dollars and not a matter of concern. True, but then the decision to devalue was taken in the light of the rising trade deficit, a common enough perception in the market substantiated by V A Jaffery in a press conference. If exports were enhanced by one billion dollars, just five months after the targets were identified, the market wonders as to whether the government is being too optimistic. And if the decision to devalue in Pakistan was taken due to the devaluation in India then what are the chances that our exports would actually rise instead of just being stable, the market asks. It is important for the country's economic managers to accept the state of the economy and then to effect reform policies. This, in itself, would negate idle rumours from gathering momentum.

Sri Lanka

'Full Text' of President's Amnesty Offer

BK0712050995 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 7 Dec 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] PRESIDENT Chandrika Kumaratunga in what appeared to be a magnanimous gesture in victory extended on Wednesday an open invitation to LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] cadres to lay down arms and surrender, holding out an amnesty as well as safety to those responding to the offer.

Addressing the nation at a ceremony held at the Presidential Secretariat to mark the successful conclusion of the first phase of the military operation to liberate the Tamil community from the clutches of the LTTE, the President also invited the people of Jaffna who were displaced, to return home to resume their normal life.

In a moving address, President Kumaratunga appealed to Sinhala and Muslim communities to continue to back the government's peace effort by remaining calm and restrained in the face of provocation.

She reminded the Tamil community that her government had already embarked on the task of finding lasting solutions to their problems. "There is no need for your children to shed blood any longer. We have created an atmosphere for you all to live in a united Sri Lanka," she told them.

"I offer my warmest gratitude and continued homage to all those mothers and fathers who have sacrificed their beloved sons and continue to support those in battle for the cause of the unity of our land, for peace and equality of all our peoples. The entire nation owes you an eternal debt.

"You are the heroes of our struggle. Let us wipe our tears in that knowledge and strive towards creating one united, peaceful and free nation where no more mothers and fathers would have to suffer the same terrible fate.

"Let us all mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and children of all communities unite together to transform that beautiful dream into reality," she said.

The president told the Tamils who lived in areas where the LTTE writ once prevailed, that they were freed from a bondage imposed on them and now they could consider themselves the citizens of a united Sri Lanka.

"Today you have been offered the supreme opportunity to free yourselves from the bondage of intolerance and terror," she told them.

The president said the peace process set in motion by her government was an unprecedented success given the backing it received from the Tamil and Muslim communities here and the world community. The only setback to it was caused by the LTTE who suddenly decided to return to violence.

She said that they were forced to wage a battle for peace. "Our battle was not waged by one group of citizens against another. Our victory is not one by which one community subjugates another."

The greatest victory of all, she added, was the victory of human values.

The president said there was still a long way to go for ushering in peace and the government had presented a program for achieving it.

Earlier, President Kumaratunga was accorded a guard of honour by the three armed forces at the Presidential Secretariat. She took the salute from a special dais where the four service chiefs stood to attention behind her. She was received by Defence secretary Chandrananda de Silva and secretary to the President K. Balapatabendi on her arrival.

Later in the Secretariat's conference hall, the president received a scroll containing a memorandum informing her of the successful conclusion of the first phase of the military operation in the North from Defence Deputy Minister Col. Anuruddha Ratwatte.

Observance of two minutes' silence as a mark of respect to fallen heroes and all others who made the supreme sacrifice for the cause of peace preceded the proceedings.

Speaker K.B. Ratnayake, Deputy Speaker Anil Moonesinghe, Ministers, and MPs were present.

The following is the text of the President's speech:

"Yesterday in the morning of December 5, the Government of Sri Lanka has successfully terminated Phase 1 of the Battle for Peace, waged against terrorism, separatism and racism of all sorts.

Moments ago, the Commanders of the forces, led by Commander of the Army, announced the happy news to me.

We rejoice in this event, with immense pride and humility. We see the dawn of a new era today. We have lit up the path which will lead all the peoples living in our land, towards peace and prosperity, as Sri Lankan citizens of an equal and free society. We have reconquered the right for all peoples of all communities to live in brotherhood within one, united Sri Lanka.

Our battle was not waged by one group of citizens against another. Our victory is not one by which one community subjugates another. Our struggle was waged to prevent the division of our land.

It was waged against the selfish terrorism that wrought terrible distinction of all the rights and freedoms of a people under the guise of liberating them. It was also a struggle against the LTTE terror which wreaked havoc in the entire Sri Lankan body politic and in all our lives.

The first phase of one battle was: to do what was first required in order to unite our divided nation — its land and its peoples. For this purpose, we accorded priority to reuniting the peoples, in conflict with one another. We commenced a dialogue for peace, with all groups that were in conflict with the government, a dialogue with the Tamil people and with all organisations representing the Tamils, including the LTTE.

Our government made great efforts at entering the path of peace. We tried to understand correctly the problems of the Tamil community of Sri Lanka. We implemented durable solutions to the historic injustices caused to the Tamil people, and to the various problems caused to their daily lives be the continuous armed hostilities.

The high water mark of this process is the devolution package proposed by our government. The sincerity of our peace program has been victorious in every sense, except one.

Our greatest victory here, is the support and dedication of our Sinhala brethren, to the peace program as expounded by my government.

The other victory is the support and commitment of the Tamil people to our program.

Another victory is the complete solidarity shown by the Muslim, Malay and Burgher communities. Last but not least, is our success internationally. The world community and their States which isolated Sri Lanka, criticised us and saw our peoples as savage terrorists with no respect for humanitarian values, are today in full support of our government's peace program.

The praise that keeps flowing in from the four corners of the world, the recognition given to our government and to me as the head of the Sri Lanka state have permitted us once again to walk with our heads held high and in dignity before the world.

The only defeat suffered by the program for peace were the attacks directed against it by the LTTE.

We transformed our peace program into a battle for peace, only in order to defeat those attacks against peace. We have today achieved victory in the first phase of that battle. We still have a long way to go in our battle to end the war and to win a durable peace. We have presented the political solution for that purpose.

If there is any group or person who does not wish to enter into dialogue for this stage of one program, then, I must mention that our forces stand fully prepared to face all further military challenges that may arise.

At this moment of our victory, let us not crow over military victims. Let us fill our hearts with humaneness. We must not allow ourselves to forget that all wars, however savage they may be, are finally won through human dialogue.

I request my Sinhala people today, on behalf of my government, to continue steady to show the same patience and humaneness you have so nobly demonstrated by extremists on both sides of the divide.

I ask my people belonging to the Tamil community to continue to recognise that our government is ready to implement programs to resolve your problems. Although some of you may have agreed to accept the authority of a terrorist group, as you had no other alternative previously, today you have been offered the supreme opportunity to free yourself from the bondage of intolerance and terror perpetrated by the extremists on both sides.

"You do not need to continue any more, the sacrifices you made with the blood and lives of your children.

I invite you in all sincerity, to rise up once again, as a proud people, living within a free, democratic and united Sri Lanka. Where you and your children could live and work as noble citizens in brotherhood with us all.

I write to all those who left Jaffna to return to your homes and lands and live peacefully with security. My government undertakes to ensure you that.

I invite all members of the LTTE to lay down arms and violence. The government will offer you an amnesty to your safety.

I invite all parties and organisations representing the Tamil people to continue even more actively the support you have given to my Government's programs for peace.

It is now time to offer personally on behalf of my government and the entire people, the nation's heartfelt gratitude and homage to all the personnel of the four forces who have sacrificed their lives, and to those who have rendered a magnificent service to our country.

I also offer my homage and gratitude to the supreme commanders of the four forces for the great and courageous leadership they have given their men during these dark and troubled days.

To Minister A. Ratwatte I offer my personal gratitude and homage and that of our government and country for the commitment and courage he has shown in leading the defence establishment through difficult times.

I offer my warmest gratitude and continued homage to all those mothers and fathers who have sacrificed their beloved sons and continue to support those in battle for the cause of the unity of our land for peace and equality of all our peoples. The entire nation is indebted to you.

You are the heroes of our struggle. Let us wipe our tears in that knowledge and strive towards creating one unit peaceful and free nations, their no more mothers and fathers would have to suffer the same tangible ...

Let us all mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and children of all communities unite together to transform that beautiful dream into reality.

Army Chief Warns LTTE Against Attempt in East

BK0712112495 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0928 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, 7 Dec (LANKAPUVATH) — Sri Lanka's Army Commander Lieutenant General Gerry de Silva sounded a stern warning to the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] that they will be dealt with firmly and severely in the Eastern Province, too.

The army chief told LANKAPUVATH Thursday [7 December] that the Tigers were dreaming if they imagined that they could take control of the east. They would be severely beaten as had been done in Jaffna.

The dedication, commitment, support and cooperation of President Chandrika Kumaratunga and Deputy Minister of Defence Colonel Anuruddha Ratwatte were a great source of strength and inspiration in the security forces' winning the battle for Jaffna against the LTTE and re-establishing the writ and authority of the government in the northern capital and the entire Valigamam division of the Jaffna Peninsula, he said.

They were dedicated to the peace process through negotiations and when the LTTE reneged on the cessation of hostilities agreement, the president and the deputy defence minister were equally dedicated to restoring peace by defeating the terrorists at war.

He thanked the president and the deputy defence minister for the magnificent support and inspiration given in every sphere of activity. Everything we asked for, we were given, from extra manpower to modern vehicles, arms, ammunition and communication equipment.

Gen. de Silva said that Sri Lankan soldiers are today as good as the best in the world. Two years ago the army was at a low ebb. But, with reorganising, restructuring, sound training, better command and control with strong and efficient leadership down the chain of commander and a high level of discipline, our army is now among the best in the world, and soldiers can now walk with their heads held high.

Police Details Tamil Rebel Suicide Attack in East

BK0712053795 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 7 Dec 95

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At least 90 believed killed during LTTE attack in east.

At least ninety police personnel, rebels and civilians were killed during a rebel attempt to overrun a camp of the elite Special Task Force (STF) in eastern Batticaloa district on Tuesday afternoon, police officials said.

"At least fifty terrorists were killed," said a senior police officer adding that 29 STF and police reservists including three Inspectors were killed along with 12 Tamil civilians who happened to be travelling in a bus which was sprayed with bullets by the Tigers.

According to a senior officer of the Police Commandos, a large number of rebels had carried out the attack which commenced around 3 p.m. Tuesday on the STF camp at Pudikudirippu, about eight miles south of Batticaloa town on the Kalmunai road.

"The terrorists launched the attack with an explosive laden van being driven into the camp, but only one of our sentires was killed when he fired at the oncoming van which proceeded without heeding orders to stop," said the officer adding that the vehicle had blown up at the barrier at the entrance to the camp.

He said that simultaneously, rebels had directed fire at the camp from the surrounding shrub jungles. While the STF personnel in the camp returned fire reinforcements from several nearby camps were rushed into the besieged camp, he said.

The Tigers had however, ambushed two of these groups killing 28 police and STF men, he said. One of the ambushed groups however, had managed to kill about 50 rebel cadres before their buffle mine resistant vehicle was blown up by a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) blast, he said.

According to him, the rebels, suspecting that some STF reinforcements were travelling in a bus carrying civilians, had also sprayed the bus with machine gun fire, killing 12 civilians.

He said that the rebel radio transmissions had confirmed the deaths of 28 of their cadres including the leader of the attackers who was identified as Major Rangan. Altogether 16 senior cadres had been confirmed killed said the officer adding that though the rebels mentioned only 28 being killed, the number was expected to be as high as 50 killed and many more wounded.

Soldiers from nearby army camps as well as air force helicopters were involved in the fighting which came a few hours after Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte, addressed victorious government troops who had captured the Liberation Tigers of Tamil eelam's northen rebel bastion of Jaffna town in the island's northern peninsula in nearly 50 days of fighting in an operation code named 'Riviresa'.

Tamil Rebels Admit Loss in Attack

BK0712052195 Hong Kong AFP in English 0427 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Dec 7 (AFP) — Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers admitted Thursday they lost 28 rebels in a suicide attack on police that sought to avenge the loss of their bastion in the northern Jaffna peninsula.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said over its clandestine radio that its suicide squad, the Black Tigers, carried out the attack Tuesday on the police Special Task Force (STF) camp in Batticaloa, in the east of the island.

The radio said a large number of STF commandos were killed for the loss of 28 rebels, when the LTTE tried to ram an explosives-laden truck into the police camp and later ambushed a column of reinforcements.

Military officials, for their part, say 23 STF commandos and six civilians working for the security forces were killed, and estimated the Tigers' losses at at least 17.

The Tigers' radio said the attackers destroyed four armoured vehicles, but the military says only one was caught up in the LTTE ambush.

"The Tigers hit an armoured personnel carrier killing 19 commandos," a military spokesman here said, adding that the air force was called in to beat off the LTTE attack.

The do-or-die assault came barely three hours after deputy defence minister Anuruddha Ratwatte hoisted the national flag in the former rebel stronghold of Jaffna in the island's north on the 50th day of a major offensive.

Tamil and military sources said they expected the LTTE to step up attacks, particularly in the eastern region, where the military has dismantled several camps in order to deploy more troops in the north.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who ordered the offensive to capture the rebel citadel, offered an amnesty to the Tigers during a ceremony Wednesday marking the fall of Jaffna.

LTTE 'Press Release' for 28 Nov

BK0512145795 (Internet) soc.culture.sri-lanka in English 1 Dec 95

["Press release" issued by the LTTE Political Committee at "LTTE Headquarters" on 28 November]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

A Mother Killed by Artillery Shell

In the continuing artillery shelling from Palaly military camp a mother of 3 was killed yesterday in Thondamanaru. More than 15 shells landed in the residential area at 2.00 p.m. yesterday damaging several houses.

Shell Attack Affects Farming Activities

The daily aerial bombing and artillery shelling has had a major impact on primary productional farming activities in the Jaffna peninsula. The deaths of civilians on a daily basis has resulted in very few farmers proceeding with the seasonal farming. Several farmers have abandoned their farms and relocated to Vanni in the Tamil mainland.

Tamil Eelam National Heroes Day Commemorated

Tamil Eelam National Heroes Day was commemorated on 27th November 1995 all over Tamil Eelam. Tens of thousands of people paid homage to the fallen heroes at war memorials in Vadamaratchi and Thenmaratchi. From Jaffna to Amparai in the far South of Tamil Eelam homes and streets were decorated for the commemoration.

Special Offerings at Temples for Prabakaran's Safety

It is reported that on 26th November 1995, in several temples in the Vanni area special offerings of prayers were made by several people wishing for the safety of the life of V. Pirabakararn, the leader of the LTTE. This was Pirabakaran's 41st birthday.

More Youths Join LTTE

On 26th November 1995 several more youths including many girls volunteered to join the LTTE's Tamil National defence force. Manpower recruitment centres in

Mannar, Multaitivu, Vanni and Jaffna districts reported significant increases in their daily intakes.

Everyday 4,000 People Cross to Mainland

Everyday at Kilaly more than 4, 000 people are crossing over by boat from Thenmaratchi to Vanni in the Tamil mainland. More than 250, 000 have already crossed over and are being resettled by the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation with the assistance of other relief organisations.

Airforce Planes Land While Gunboats Give Cover

Yesterday morning at 7:00 a.m. three Dvora fast attack crafts anchored off Kankesanthurai, in the flight path to Palaly air base fired several rounds of 20 mm cannon fire into Thondamanaru. During this time a Sri Lankan air force plane landed at the air base. Only recently a Y-8 aircraft was shot down by the LTTE's navy in this area.

[Signed] Political Committee, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

(English Translation of LTTE statement is released by the LTTE International Secretariat, 211 Katherine Rd, London E6 1BU, UK. Tel/Fax: 0181-470 8593)

LTTE 'Press Release' for 2 Dec

BK0512130295 (Internet) soc.culture.sri-lanka in English 4 Dec 95

["Press release" issued by the LTTE Political Committee at "LTTE Headquarters" on 2 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Scenes of fierce battle close to Ariyakulam

LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] fighters had gathered their forces and closed in on the Sri Lankan army nearing the Jaffna city. Yesterday at midday the LTTE made a sudden charge on the enemy near Ariyakulam. Over 15 soldiers were killed and over 100 were injured. It is learnt hat the LTTE used light machine guns and mortar shells in this attack.

"I regret that I did not take the advice of the LTTE" old man

Rayappu Anthonippillai who was rescued by the LTTE in Eachchamoddai on the 23rd of November regretted that he had not heeded the LTTE advice in time. He was injured by shells fired on his house by the army. He was bleeding and the LTTE who rescued him had rushed him to the hospital. He is 73 and has undergone the worst experience of his life. "People should thank the LTTE for their foresight in asking them to evacuate Valigamam. Nobody would have escaped from the raining shells," observed the old man from his hospital bed.

Soldiers of the Mandaitivu army camp attempted a landing onto Jaffna city

The army stationed in Mandaitivu yesterday attempted to cross the short stretch of water and land on the Jaffna city coastline. The LTTE resisted this and a fierce fight resulted.

St. Antony's church of Passaiyoor Damaged, places of worship, public buildings and houses damaged by shells.

Due to the severity of the artillery attack damage to buildings in the Valigamam and Jaffna city area is quite heavy. The Koiyathodam Pillaiyar temple in the north of the Jaffna city is badly damaged. The St. Antony's church of Passayoor is equally damaged. Untold damage had been done to houses, market places and schools.

Nobody came to look at us says released civilian prisoner.

Gopalakrishnan Krishnakumar, a person released from army custody recently stated that no organisation was allowed by the army to look after the welfare of prisoners held in Palaly army camp. During his entire period of incarceration no such organisation turned up at Palaly.

Due to torture six civilian prisoners in comatose state.

Of the 48 persons still in army custody in the Palaly army camp, six are in a comatose state due to army torture. They have lost knowledge of their surroundings. Two women from Kondavil and two men from Puttur are being treated in the army hospital for injuries. More than 30 are suffering from chickenpox. Diarrhea is rife among the prisoners states a released prisoner. Till the time of their release torture of prisoners is a daily occurrence says the same prisoners.

The sorry tale of a released prisoner: Shooting and looting.

Thampyah Vishnukanthan, age 30, who was taken prisoner on 15.07.95 during the abortive Leap Forward army operation states that many like him had been shot to death by the army. He states further systematic looting of houses and public buildings is usual for the Sri Lankan army. Army vehicles are used for transporting the looted goods. The goods are ultimately sent to Colombo by ship. Household items, vehicles, garden produce and large amounts of luxury goods are collected and sent to Colombo in this way said the released prisoner.

LTTE cadres in the field have reported that the military is setting up several base camps and bunker positions in the newly captured areas in the peninsula. They are bulldozing houses and buildings and using the rubble to build bunker positions around their base camps. The damage to property so far is estimated to be well over several million rupees.

Spreading of diseases in refugee camps

Health workers in Thenmaratchi and Vadamaratchi have informed that infectious diseases are spreading rapidly in the area due to mosquito and fly feeding in the wet weather and overcrowding. Diarrhea, influenza and eye infections are said to be the most common among the refugee population. Essential medicines including glucose and treatments are no longer available in the hospitals.

[Signed] Political Committee, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

(English translation of the LTTE statement released by LTTE international secretariat, 211 Katherine Road, London E6 1BU, United Kingdom, Tel/Fax: 0181-470 8593.)

LTTE 'Press Release' for 3 Dec

BK0512130695 (Internet) soc.culture.sri-lanka in English 4 Dec 95

["Press release" issued by the LTTE Political Committee at "LTTE Headquarters" on 3 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] forces resist army advance in the centre of Jaffna city

The defence ministry yesterday declared that the army had captured the 16th century Dutch fort of Jaffna and taken control of the Pannai land bridge that connects Jaffna to the Mandaitivu island. Contrary to this it is learnt that severe fighting is taking place in the centre of Jaffna town between LTTE forces and Sri Lankan forces. Yesterday the military entered parts of Jaffna town with heavy mortar shelling directed into the central area. Fighting was taking place at close quarters, with LTTE forces returning fire. Due to heavy losses being sustained at a regular rate the Sri Lankan forces have been slowed down in their advance into the city. Sri Lankan Pucara fighter planes have also bombarded the city area.

Artillery shells fall on Thenmaratchi coast

Artillery shelling from Palaly army base is now systematically being directed into Thenmaratchi and Vadamaratchi areas where displaced people have taken refuge. Thanankilappu near Chavakachcheri was hit by shells yesterday and one person, Sinnathurai Nadarasa (55) who had fled from Columbuththurai in the Jaffna, was seriously injured. Sri Lankan Navy 'Dvora' patrol crafts have also fired on fishing vessels in the coastal areas near Valvettithurai. Many fishermen had to abandon their boats, jump into the sea and swim back to shore to avoid being killed.

Malaria spreading fast among refugees

In Thenmaratchi so far more than 3531 people have been treated for flu, of whom 565 have been infected with cerebral malaria. Malaria is spreading very fast due to the rainy season and overcrowding in Thenmaratchi.

LTTE gives advice to the people in Thenmaratchi to move to Vanni Mainland

The LTTE has advised the civilians who fled from Valigamam to Thenmaratchi, to move to Vanni in the Tamil main land, to reduce the overcrowding in Thenmaratchi. Food, medicines, accommodation and other essential supplies and services are in short supply in Thenmaratchi. The Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation, Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organisation and other non-governmental agencies are organising to resettle people in Vanni area. The LTTE is urging people to go to Vanni and settle down as a temporary measure. They have said that, soon the military will direct its bombing into Thenmaratchi and if people do not move to Vanni without delay they could face the prospect of serious threat to their lives.

Body of the youth lies in army controlled area

The body of a youth who had been shot and killed by the army was found in Puttur East. Recently some people went to Puttur to have a look at their houses were arrested by the army. The dead youth aged 18 was one of them. The army had killed him and thrown his body away. People who had bravely gone to the area last week had seen his decayed body.

Body of dead boatman recovered

Out of the five people who had been killed in the attack by the Sri Lankan navy on the passenger boats plying in the Jaffna lagoon, the body of a single person had been recovered from the sea. Nothing is known about the rest of the dead persons. The body of Rasan Kunnayakam, the father of five children was found in the seacoast. The navy shooting occurred on 29th November.

People who had stayed behind run short of food and medicine

An inmate of Vaddukoddai who had very recently arrived in Thenmaratchi has a sorry tale to tell. The few elderly people and some families who had stubbornly refused to leave are now facing starvation. Their food stock has run short. The medicines they had in hand is coming to an end. It is now too late for them to abandon Valigamam area.

[Signed] Political Committee, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

(English translation of the LTTE statement released by LTTE international secretariat, 211 Katherine Road, London E6 1BU, United Kingdom, Tel/Fax: 0181-470 8593.)

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